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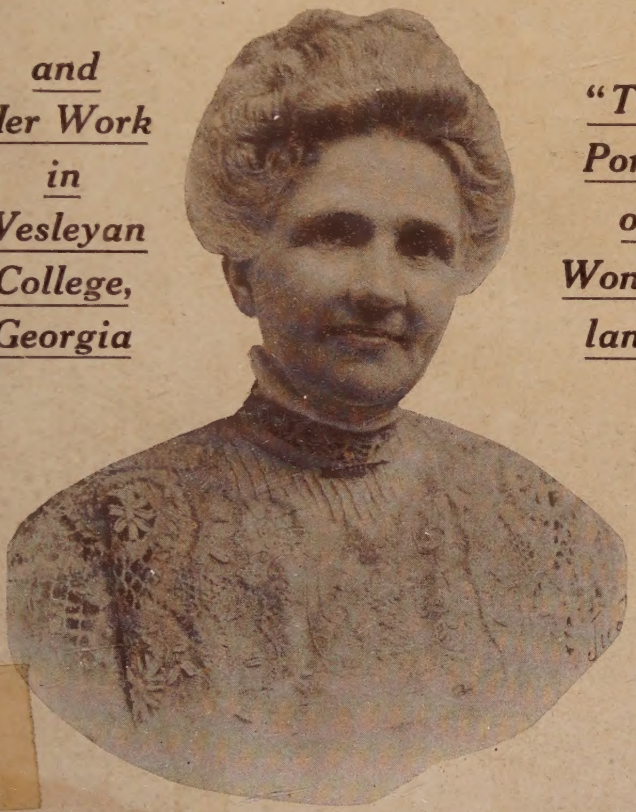
The Life-Story of Alice Culler Cobb

and Her Work in Wesleyan College, Georgia

"The Portal of Wonder-land"



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THE LIFE-STORY
OF
ALICE CULLER COBB

GRADUATE AND PRINCIPAL
OF
WESLEYAN COLLEGE,
GEORGIA

Alice Culler Cobb

Cobb

The Portal of Wonderland

THE LIFE-STORY OF ALICE CULLER COBB

BY

MARY CULLER WHITE

Author of "The Days of June," Etc.

ILLUSTRATED

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To

Mrs. Cobb's Wesleyan Daughters

FOREWORD

THIS Life Story is a real biography of a real woman. That woman was one of the South's foremost daughters, and the book has been written to give to her many friends a picture of her life. I have not tried to idealize Mrs. Cobb, nor to glorify her in any way; but rather to show her as an altogether human personality—one who struggled and achieved, was baffled and discouraged, rose, by the help of friends, to struggle on, and, finally, passed out of life like a true and faithful soldier, with her armor buckled on.

The story is imperfectly written, but I want to say that it would not have been written at all had I not been inspired by the thought that Mrs. Cobb would have believed that I could write it. Not that she would have wanted it written; but she would have believed that I could write it, if it *ought* to be written. The fact that I have written it at all is part and parcel with the theme of the book, which is nothing less than the accomplishment of the impossible, through the inspiration of Mrs. Cobb's personality.

Many times, as I have engaged in this work I have felt that I would have to give up; and, sometimes, I have wanted to put the manuscript into the fire. But each time I have been restrained from

destroying it, and have been impelled to push on to the end. Now, at last, the manuscript of the completed book is before me, just as my feet are about to pass over the gangplank of the ship that is to take me back to China. No, not the completed book—for it will never be completed. Each reader who knew Mrs. Cobb will have to read into it her own stories and incidents—stories which may be far better than anything that I have included; and thus I hope that the book will live, not for anything that I have put into it, but for the memories that it will revive.

Although I have been limited as to the number of people whose help I was able to seek, still it must be admitted that the circumstances which have attended the gathering of the material and the writing of the book have been, for the most part, extremely favorable. Kind friends have made it possible for me to spend six months of my furlough in Macon where many of Mrs. Cobb's friends have eagerly given me help. In Tennessee other friends have opened their homes, and enabled me to pass five months in congenial surroundings at Summerfield, near beautiful Monteagle where Mrs. Cobb had her summer home.

At the latter place the quiet and beauty of the surroundings formed a well nigh perfect environment in which to work. Every day I would walk to "Radiant View" on the brow of the mountain, and spend the whole day in writing. Around me

were the giant trees of the forest, and often as I turned my steps homeward at nightfall a little rabbit would scamper across my path as if to remind me of the theme of my story.

Special thanks should be given to Mrs. R. W. MacDonell, Mrs. Ed. F. Cook, Mrs. G. W. Mathews, Dr. A. P. Bourland, Mr. J. O. A. Clark, Mrs. M. M. Burks, Mrs. C. S. Strong, Mrs. Dan Harris, Mrs. W. F. Kaderly and many others who have furnished written material that has been incorporated into the manuscript; also to Miss Dora Cronstine, Mrs. Cobb's Jewish stenographer, who at the time of Mrs. Cobb's death gathered every clipping from every paper in Georgia and Tennessee and made these into a memorial volume, which she sent to me in China; and lastly, thanks should be given to Miss Millie Cobb, and Mrs. R. F. Burden, whose accurate memories and wonderful scrap-books have furnished many of the facts recorded here.

Acknowledgment should be made of the help received from Butler's *History of Macon,* from the Semi-centennial *History of the Methodist Church in Macon,* and from many other old records.

In preparing the manuscript for the publisher, I have come under a debt of gratitude to Miss Lella Clark who has given me her services gratuitously in typing the final copy of the manuscript, and to Miss Frances Peabody who has kindly agreed to read the proofs while I go on my way to China.

Out of this material and out of my own memory of Mrs. Cobb's life and work, I have fashioned this book which is now sent forth, with a heart full of love for Wesleyan College and the hope that this institution, so dear to Mrs. Cobb's heart, may ever be a Portal of Wonderland to those who enter its doors.

M. C. W.

VANCOUVER, B. C.,
En route for China.

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I

A COLLEGE GIRL WRITES AN UNCONSCIOUS PROPHECY

THE little senior sat at her desk in the big college and twirled her pen. Before her lay a solemn-looking "composition book." At the place where it lay open the leaves were blank save for a title which stretched like a streamer headline across one page. The pen-twirler was gazing at this title, "Conversation, Its Uses and Abuses." What kind of a theme could she make out of that? She was far too reticent to speak glibly on the uses of conversation, or to write feelingly on its abuses. But write she must, for here was the uncongenial title written in her teacher's uncompromising hand.

She took up her pen, but paused to smile as a thought flitted through her mind. If the teacher really wanted information on the subject selected, why had he not asked it of her witty sister when she was a senior? Mitt could have given him plenty of information on the "uses and abuses of conversation." But to ask it of her, Alice Culler! —Here the smile faded. A glance at the clock admonished her that she must get to work and she resolutely dipped her steel pen into the ink-well of

the old fashioned, double-seated desk. She would do the best she could.

First she moralized a bit, for moralizing was the fashion with all the writers of her age. Artfully or artlessly, who knows which? She ignored the concrete subject of "Conversation" and began on the broader theme, "Language, the gift of speech; the importance of learning how to express one's thoughts; the danger of the misuse of words; equivocation; falsehood——." These ideas netted a total of four hundred words, but the greedy teacher wanted eight hundred. Alice sighed and began again. More moralizing, and then by a sudden, naïve transition, she abandoned her subject entirely and began to speak of herself.

"I am at the foot of the Mountain of Science," she wrote. "Patience and perseverence will enable me to reach the top. It is a steep mountain, and is rocky and difficult of access." The pen was moving more rapidly now, for education was her favorite theme; and one of her teachers often spoke of it under the figure of the "Mountain of Science."

She wrote on: "Multitudes stand at the foot of the mountain; many have only ascended half-way; while a few, with never-wearying steps, press forward crying, 'Excelsior.' We are here somewhat advanced on our journey. I admit that, with some of us, it has been a time of toil; but here we are progressing step by step. With perseverence and considerable industry we will reach the top. Who

knows but that some of the present students of the Wesleyan Female College will be able to cope with Mrs. Sigourney and with Mrs. Hemans? If so, they will be amply repaid for the effort they are making to reach the top of the mountain."

The theme was finished now; the toll of eight hundred words had been paid; and the young writer went to her room in the college dormitory, little dreaming that she had just written a prophecy of her own life. A poet, like Mrs. Hemans, she did not become; but an educator, traveler and writer, well able to "cope with Mrs. Sigourney" or any other pioneer in the cause of woman's intellectual emancipation, she did.

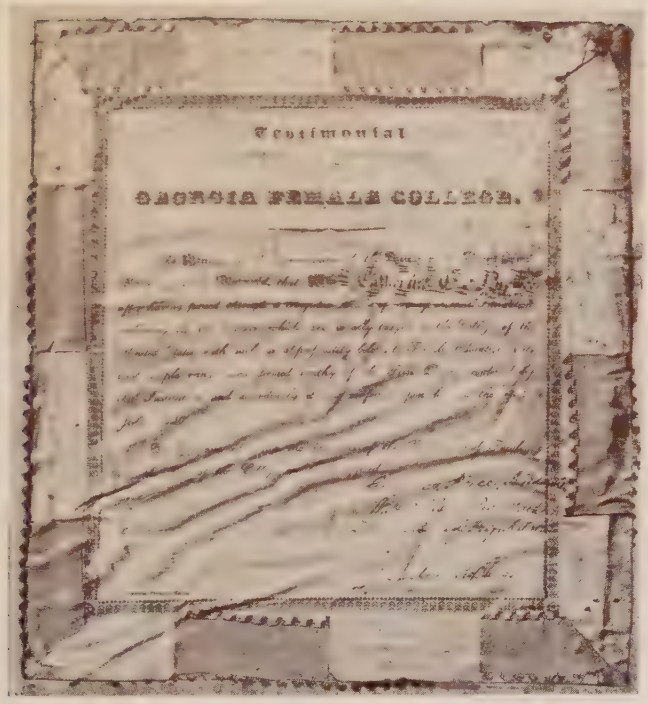
II

THE FOUNDING OF THE FIRST WOMAN'S COLLEGE

THE institution which Alice Culler was attending was the oldest chartered college for women in the world, and its history was closely linked with the history of Alice's family. The material equipment of this college consisted of only one building; but that was large in size and classic in architecture. The building crowned a high hill in the city of Macon, Georgia. The front of the structure commanded a view of the residences and the business houses of the fast forming city, while in the rear the campus sloped gently down to the little brook that divided Macon from the village of Vineville. Out beyond the city limits, to the east and the west, the north and the south, lay fertile plantations intersected with broad strips of virgin timber.

The entire region had been a forest inhabited by Indians but a few decades before; but by the treaty of 1821 the Indians had withdrawn and the white man was gradually taking possession.

There were no railroads and no highways; so civilization followed the course of the waterways. Macon was the natural head of navigation for the



First Diploma in the World Given by a Chartered Woman's College

Ocmulgee; so to the site of Macon the white men had come to build a city. That was in 1823. They brought with them sharp axes and a surveyor's chain. But before the axes were used to fell the first tree they had carefully surveyed and laid off a city half of whose streets were to be one hundred and eighty feet in width; and the others—the so-called narrow ones—to be one hundred and twenty feet in width. They built it just that way, and that is why the present citizens of Macon have room both to park their streets and to park their cars.

When the pioneers auctioned off the lots of the new city, they reserved certain choice plots for public buildings. Here a courthouse would be erected; there a meeting-house for worship; yonder on a hill there ought to be some splendid school. So the early settlers plied their axes and dreamed their dreams. They were building with a purpose. It was not to coax a living out of the newly-cleared ground, but to build a civilization.

Thirteen years after the felling of the first tree, the town had grown until it contained four thousand inhabitants. There were several churches, a courthouse and six schools. The most pretentious of these schools was called "The Academy." This had a department for boys and another for girls. When the boys graduated, the more ambitious were sent away to some college or university; but there was no place to send the girls. Many people said that this was of no consequence; but there were

others, in different parts of the state, who felt that there was no reason why the girls should not have the same advantages as the boys. One of these was Duncan G. Campbell, who, as early as 1825, had introduced a bill into the Georgia Legislature providing for the establishment of "a public seat of learning in this state for the education of females." * The institution was to be under the care of a board of trustees consisting of "fifteen males and fifteen females." This bill passed the House by a large majority; but, contrary to expectation, met with strong opposition in the Senate and was lost.

Then came a long wait during which Macon was being built. There were still no railroads; Atlanta was not; and the capital of Georgia was the struggling town of Milledgeville.

By the year 1835 Macon had arrived at a state of self-conscious prosperity. Were there not sixty tow-boats and eight small steamers plying between Macon and the sea? And were there not six stage coaches in operation—enough to have one depart from Macon every day in the week save Sunday? And was it not possible by means of fast ships to read the New York *Journal of Commerce* in Macon only five-and-a-half days after it was published? Yes, and more—Could not the citizens of this growing city learn the quotations of the Liverpool cotton market only twenty-six days after they were

* For text of this Bill see Appendix.

given out? This was real progress, and the newspapers of Macon wrote editorials on the subject.

But something was still lacking. The bright and capable girls growing up in the city and in the no less cultured homes on the surrounding plantations still had no place where they could go to college. The mothers of these girls felt that this was not right, and the more gifted of them began to write articles on the subject for the southern *Gazettes;* while others discussed the subject when they met at the sewing circle or the quilting bee. Mrs. Helen C. Plane of Atlanta, the woman who originated the idea of the Stone Mountain Memorial and who is still bright and energetic at the age of ninety-four, distinctly remembers the work her mother did at this time for the cause of "female education." By and by the men began to discuss the subject. Some of these persons of the male persuasion were scornful, and persisted in their age-old, self-assumed superiority; but others—the more thoughtful and progressive ones—gladly "made common cause" with the women and worked to break down the old prejudices. Among those of the latter class was Colonel Howell Cobb of Houston County.

The idea of having a college for women gained headway. A number of citizens became interested; and, as they talked the matter over, they turned their eyes to the vacant lot up on the hill. Why not make the long dreamed of college a "female institution" and build it up there?

Finding that the Georgia Conference of the Methodist Church was also thinking of establishing a college for women, the group of citizens in Macon determined, if possible, to join forces with that body. At a called meeting the sum of nine thousand dollars was raised in a few hours. This was supplemented later by other gifts, and an offer was made to the Conference which that body accepted by unanimous vote. All this in Macon, where the oldest house was but thirteen years old and where the tomahawks of the Indians had but lately done their deadly work.

The men of vision who now had charge of the enterprise wished to build on a sure foundation, so they applied to the Legislature for a charter. This time, for reasons of expediency, the question of having women trustees was not raised. And so it came to pass that the Georgia Female College, later called the Wesleyan Female College, was chartered by the Legislature in 1836. And no charter for any woman's college in all the world can be found that ante-dates the one then granted.

One afternoon in the following year Colonel Howell Cobb left his law office in the village of Perry and drove to his plantation home. He entered the room where his wife and daughter were sitting before the big open fire-place; he pulled off his gloves, settled his chin into the recess between the points of his sky-scraper collar, and drew from his pocket a copy of the *Macon Telegraph*. "Mary,"

he said, speaking to the girl, "it looks as though you would get to go to college. Dr. Lovick Pierce is going over the state collecting the money to put up the building."

But even so sagacious a man as this lawyer-planter could hardly know all the difficulties that Dr. Pierce was meeting in his work. Had he known, he might not have been so hopeful about Mary's going to college. Prejudice is hard to break down, especially in a conservative section like the South.

One day when this friend of female education was urging his claim upon a gentleman of large means and liberal ideas as to the education of his sons, he received the reply: "No, I will not give you a dollar. All that a woman needs to know is how to read the New Testament and to spin and weave clothing for her family."

On another occasion a man said to Dr. Pierce: "I will not give you a cent for any such object. I would not have one of your graduates for a wife, for I could not build even a pig-pen without her criticizing it and saying that it was not put up on mathematical principles."

And there were other difficulties besides those caused by prejudice. At the very time that the charter for the college was granted the Indians were committing depredations on the border of the state. A little later the trouble grew into open war. Butler's *History of Macon* says: "Large numbers of

refugees were arriving daily from Columbus, seeking protection from the torches, rifles, and tomahawks of the Indians. The trouble grew so bad that the Georgia militia was ordered out and the people of Macon watched their strongest men ride away to fight with the savages."

Still another difficulty that hindered the work of gathering money for the college was a financial panic. The steamer's accounts from Europe announced heavy failures in England, great stringency in the money market, and sharp decline in cotton. Immediately upon receipt of this news the whole South was enveloped in gloom. This was the beginning of the great financial panic of 1837, the effect of which lasted for nine years.

And in the midst of all this a few far-visioned men of Macon, together with some square-jawed circuit riders of the Georgia Conference, were trying to raise the money for that unpopular enterprise—a woman's college.

But these Macon business men and Methodist preachers stopped not for the rebuffs of ignorance, the attacks of Indians, nor the tightness of the times. At the end of two-and-a-half years a splendid building stood on the hill. It had been erected at a cost of eighty-five thousand dollars and was encumbered with only twenty thousand dollars indebtedness. The sum that had been raised was the equivalent of several hundred thousand dollars today.

Catherine Brewer Benson

The pioneers and the preachers had not failed. Mary could now go to college. And this Mary was none other than the mother of Alice, the theme-writer.

To college Mary went. She was present when the Georgia Female College was solemnly opened on January 7, 1839. Her name was one of the ninety enrolled that day. A year-and-a-half later she saw the first class graduate. The students of this class had entered with advanced credits having been tutored by well-trained teachers. The course of study they had now completed, although not the equivalent of the present-day college course, compared favorably with that of the men's colleges of that day.

It was a time of great rejoicing when in July, 1840, the people of Macon and the surrounding territory assembled to see eleven young ladies receive diplomas that carried with them the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The parchments were delivered in alphabetical order; and Mary saw Catherine Brewer, whose name was the first on the roll, come forward and receive her diploma.

What Mary could not know was that, some day, when Catherine Brewer had become Mrs. Benson and the mother of an admiral, she would give that diploma back to her Alma Mater; that this parchment would be hung on the wall of the old college as its proudest possession; that people would make pilgrimages to see it there; and that college presi-

dents would gaze wistful-eyed upon it—the first diploma in all the world to be given to a woman by a chartered female college.

But even though Mary did not understand the full significance of the occasion, she knew that it was a great day. As she rode toward home in the stage coach next day, she was thinking of the time when she, too, would graduate. She was seventeen now and it would not be long until that crowning moment would come to her.

III

ALICE'S BABYHOOD

IN THE summer following the eventful graduation something unforeseen happened to the ambitious Mary Cobb. A certain young Dr. Culler of Orangeburg, South Carolina, graduate of the University of Virginia and of Jefferson College of Physicians and Surgeons in Philadelphia, rode into the village and fell in love with the young college girl before he alighted from his horse. Then Mary Cobb went to college no longer, but became Mary Cobb Culler.

"I wish I had a baby that would talk baby-talk," said Mrs. Culler some three years later as she took her first offspring on her lap. "Mitt talks so plainly that she does not seem like a baby at all. Ask her who is the President of the United States."

The question was asked, and in clear accents the two-year-old replied, "John Tyler."

The mother said, "She can go right on and name the Governor of Georgia or any other dignitary. Now would you call her a real baby?"

Three years later the visitor was again calling at the Culler home. Mitt, the precocious, now a child of five, was attending school. Alice, the sec-

ond child, had backed off into a corner at the advent of the visitor; Emma, the baby, was in Mrs. Culler's lap.

"How do you feel now about wanting a real baby?" asked the visitor with a smile.

"Oh," said the mother, with a twinkle in her eye, "Alice has made me change my mind. She is three years old now and seldom talks at all; and when she does you can hardly understand a word she says." Turning to the child in the corner, she asked: "Alice, who is the president of the United States?" No reply. "Alice, I want you to say 'James K. Polk.' Try to say it."

Slowly the lips parted and four words dropped out, "Me fan't [shan't] do it."

"Then tell me who is the governor of Georgia?" pursued the mother. "Your sister could tell me long before she was your age." No reply. "Alice, say 'George W. Crawford.'"

Again the lips moved: "Me fan't do it."

The mother frowned, but her eyes were merry. "Alice, how old are you? Say, 'I am three years old.'"

Again the shy and silent child parted her lips. Five words this time: "Me fan't, and me ain't." There was a note of finality in her voice. Her mother heard it and desisted.

When the caller got up to leave, Mrs. Culler went with her to the gate. "You see how it is," she said. "I wonder if I've got a fool."

All the children in Perry were started to school young—the younger, the better, so everybody seemed to think. Mitt had started at five and was making splendid progress. If a bright child like Mitt needed to start at five, then a slow one like Alice should begin earlier. So when she was about half-past four Alice was started to the village school. She objected, of course; so she had to be taken by force in the arms of her negro nurse. This she resented. The heart of the future pedagogue and apostle of common sense rebelled; and she expressed her rebellion by crying lustily and kicking the shins of the nurse. When she was deposited at the school, she cried still harder; all day she cried. By the end of that day both the teachers and the nurse had had enough. If Alice stayed in school, all the other pupils would have to leave, so the faculty recommended to the Culler family that the beginning of Alice's education be postponed for several years.

IV

ALICE'S SCHOOL DAYS

THE town in which Alice Culler grew up had a distinct influence upon her life. Perry was small in size and young in years, but was old in the things that make up that fine old southern atmosphere of hospitality, refinement, education, and religion. The pioneers had brought this atmosphere with them when they came to clear the land.

One of these pioneers was Alice's grandfather, Colonel Cobb—a man of fine mind, was a printer by trade and a planter by the necessities of his pioneer life. He established the first Sunday school in the little community soon after his arrival. So ambitious was this citizen of Perry that in his leisure hours he studied both law and theology; being admitted to the Georgia Bar, and becoming an effective local preacher of the Methodist Church. Under the influence of Colonel Cobb and of others like him the struggling little community attained a high type of culture and of morals—a type which has been preserved and handed down from generation to generation. It is one of those rare towns that has never grown much in size because it has dared to care more for culture than for commerce;

but year by year it has sent practically all of its sons and daughters off to college where they have graduated with high honors, and from whence they have gone out to fill high positions in the religious or educational world.

It was in the choice atmosphere of this town that Alice Culler grew up. From the broad veranda of her home she daily watched her father leave his office—a little wooden building in the corner of the yard—and drive away behind a pair of brisk bay horses. She often wished to go with him; but she couldn't, for no one ever knew when he would be back. By night and by day, in fair weather or foul, with pay or without, through village and country, over rough roads and through swollen creeks the man in the buggy pushed tirelessly on. He was one of the heroes of the old days—just the country doctor making his rounds.

Nor was his wife less busy. She hated sewing, but she sewed—sewed not only for the family, but for the slaves who would have been helpless without her care. When home duties were over, she did her bit for the town—choir rehearsal every week; church duties of every kind, including the securing of preachers to fill the pulpit when the circuit rider was away; visits of cheer to those in sorrow; tempting food sent to the sick; and nights of watching beside the dying, or the dead.

Yes, Mrs. Culler was a busy woman, but she always had time for her family; and she soon dis-

covered that her fears about Alice had been unfounded. The child was not a fool. Indeed, when all the children were in school, Alice proved to be the most studious of the three. Her grandfather quickly saw beneath the shy exterior and chose little Alice as his companion and adopted daughter. After that Alice spent much of her time in the home of her grand-parents, where the room she loved best was the library with its many rows of books. Her grandfather was now busy making a big law book—the first thorough analysis ever attempted of the statutes and forms of the state of Georgia—but he was never too busy to talk to Alice or to direct her reading. Her first taste for literature was formed in that quiet room on the plantation home.

Sometimes the grandfather's business called him to New York, and on one of these occasions he took little Alice with him. This trip was the child's introduction to the outside world. As her eyes looked out over the rimless sea; and later, as she gazed at the strange sights of the great city, her taste for travel was formed. She determined to see it all some day—the whole round world.

The schools of Perry were good and were constantly being improved. By the time Alice was ten years old the citizens of the little town had made special provision for the education of their girls by establishing the Houston Female College. This college, after the manner of other schools of its time, admitted students of lower grades to its pre-

paratory department, and later passed these up into the collegiate department. It was an excellent school which to-day would be ranked as a Junior College. To this institution the three girls of the Culler family were sent. Mitt was the most popular of the trio, and soon became prominent through her wit and her pranks. Alice was quiet, and attracted little notice; but day by day she was laying foundations. Mrs. Culler watched the progress of the girls eagerly, for she was determined to send all of her daughters to her Alma Mater to finish their education.

In the autumn of 1855 the two older girls entered Wesleyan College. The classic front of the building looked imposing to Alice when she approached it as a prospective pupil. She was only twelve years old, and was small for her age. How glad she was that Mitt, who knew how to talk, was with her; for had her sister not been there, Alice dreaded to think what would have become of her.

Alice was assigned to the sophomore class and Mitt to the junior. The tortoise was catching up with the hare.

When the girls were settled in their room, Alice took out the catalogue and studied it. She read the course of study from the geometry and Biblical Antiquities of the sophomore year to the analysis of English classics and evidences of Christianity of the senior year. The curriculum looked hard enough to discourage any girl of her age, but Alice's eyes

brightened as she read. She had hear her mother and grandfather talk about Wesleyan as a real college, and she knew that the course would necessarily be hard. Proudly she raised her head as she thought of the history of Wesleyan, and of how her mother had been present when the college was opened. She made up her mind to do her best to be worthy of her family and of her mother's college.

Three years later Alice was finishing her senior year and preparing to graduate. Her hair was up, and her skirts were down; but otherwise she looked the girl of fifteen that she really was. Mitt had graduated the year before and had gone home happy that her school days were ended; but Alice had not been lonely without her. She had friends now—lots of them—and she had the joy of a student who was fond of her work.

V

A WESLEYAN COMPOSITION BOOK OF 1858

HOW well Alice Culler did her college work is shown in her "senior composition book," which, by a fortunate circumstance, has been preserved.

It is a plain book on the outside, for its grayish board covers are of the marbled type, so familiar to all Wesleyanites who ante-date the era of loose-leaf theme books and bobbed hair. The inside of the book is more attractive, for the leaves have yellowed with age, and browned with the imprint of objects left for decades between the forgotten pages—a faded letter dated September 14, 1860; a band of paper which once held together a package of envelopes; and carefully arranged locks of hair in varying shades from blond to brown. Each of these articles has left a shadowy imprint across some theme. On this mellow background the handwriting stands out clear and distinct. One glance reveals the diligence of the little theme of long ago; for it must have taken infinite pains to make the fine hairline writing with its punctilious shading, dignified flourishes, and profuse capitalization.

An investigation of the book reveals a wide range

of subjects assigned by some able though serious-minded teacher for the contemplation of young seniors whom he would fain make as serious-minded as himself. And at least one of his pupils did not disappoint him.

Alice's book reveals her addressing herself seriously to such subjects as: "Elizabeth and the State of Learning—Manufactures, and Domestic Life, During her Reign"; "Application Better than Genius"; "Great Results from Little Things"; "Ruth, A Character Sketch"; "Properties and the Uses of Atmosphere" (a scientific article which is usable to-day); "Palestine"; and "Alexander's Feast"—a criticism of Dryden's poem.

The treatment of these subjects is quaint, attractive, and even amusing in places; but the style is clear and the diction pure. Indeed, barring the stilted style and moralizing tone which were used by all writers of that day, the essays compare favorably with the longer themes of present-day college students; so that the book, as a whole, bears eloquent witness to the type of scholarship which characterized the Wesleyan graduate in those early days.

But if you, reader, are still dubious and think that one so young could not properly be termed the graduate of a real college, then get the old book and read for yourself, you can find it in the Alumnae Room of Alice's college; but mind that you are careful as you turn the pages, for the glue of

the moth-eaten binding is giving up its feeble hold on the leaves; and then, too, a careless turn might cause a lock of hair or the letter to drop out.

Before you have read long, you will find that the book is valuable not only as a testimonial of scholarship, but also for the light that it throws on Alice's character. In one theme she was required to write a bit of fiction under the title, *Autobiography of Mary Lamport.* It is evident that she drew freely on her own experience for the material used. In one passage she says: "About this time I formed a resolution which I have been accustomed to regard as an important event in my life, though to the superficial observer it may seem a trifle. I am persuaded that irresolution is precursor to most failures and so-called misfortunes; and I believe that in most instances when an accomplishment is possible, a resolve surmounts the greatest opposing barrier. Hence the importance which I attach to a determined purpose. I resolved to obey implicitly the dictates of conscience and to pursue the pathway of rectitude, trusting in my Maker for aid."

But for all her moralizing and her precocity, the Alice Culler of those early days was a real girl. For one thing, the accusing red ink of her teacher's pen had found her out. The old book is marked in a number of places where words were misspelled.

Hear it, ye girls of the South, who later trembled under her glance! In the word "believe" and all its cousins, the *i* and the *e* had a way of getting

mixed up for her just as they have ever done for common mortals. Perhaps that is why, in after years, she sometimes smiled and let it go when some roguish girl—a born bluffer—made the *i* and the *e* exactly alike and placed the dot in an impartial position between them.

But the second deflection in that direction of real girlhood was even more human. The fly leaf of the theme book is covered with scribbling—just such senseless scribbling as the bobbed-haired girl scrawls in her books to-day. The inside cover and the blank page opposite it are full of names. There are eight "Cullers"; one "Alice Culler"; one "Mary Alice Culler" (a name she never bore); two "Alices"; and one "Alice and Lizzie." But that is not all. There are two "Johnnies"; nine "Johnnie Felders"; eleven "Felders"; one "F"; and one "Johnnie R. Felder."

Consider this, if you please, in a time when they kept Wesleyan girls shut up behind brick walls and breast-works of iron rules.

VI

ALICE'S GRADUATION

AS the time approached for the Class of 1858 to graduate, the air was full of excitement. Everybody wanted to know who would carry off the college honors. Although Alice Culler was so young, she had studied hard and was easily among the best students in her class. But there were two others who had studied as hard as she, and both of these had the advantage of being several years her senior. It was a foregone conclusion, as Alice thought, that one of these older girls would get the first honor and the other, second. In that case she would get nothing.

One of the contestants for the honor was Mary Houston, familiarly known as "Mollie." She was five years Alice's senior; but, in spite of the disparity in age and the rivalry in scholarship, the two were fast friends. A common love of study bound them together; and then, too, the older girl was invested with a romantic interest for Alice because she was engaged to be married.

Her lover was Young J. Allen, who expected to be a missionary; and Mollie intended to sail with him for China, or some other far-away place. Alice

wondered how Mollie could waste her life like that; but she had to admit that it was fine of Mollie to be brave enough to start off for goodness knows where, with nothing but a sailing ship to take her there. Perhaps the bravery would atone for the foolishness. Anyway Mollie was a dear and she couldn't help loving her. She hoped—here Alice's thoughts went trailing off to the contest for the honors.

At last the day arrived for the honors to be read out. The president came to the front of the platform and announced: "Miss Mary Houston and Miss Marion Rose have tied for first honor. They will share the honor and each write a section valedictory. The second honor goes to Alice Culler, who will write the salutatory."

On the great commencement day Alice was seated on the platform with her salutatory in her hand. What she had prepared was no ordinary address of welcome. She had something to say, for she had studied the history of her college and knew the vicissitudes through which it had passed. She knew, too, that there were still people who were saying stupid things against the higher education of woman. Therefore, when her name was called, she stepped to the front of the platform and fought a battle for herself, her sex, and her school in her three part salutatory, the text of which has been preserved in her old composition book:

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

It is no doubt a pleasure and gratification to you, as well as a duty, to preside over the interests of our noble college.

It was through your influence that this college was organized:—the first, not only in Georgia and the United States, but in the world, where a regular collegiate course was imparted to females. Through your influence, directly or indirectly, *woman* has been gradually brought to a knowledge of the revealed truths of science, and elevated to the high position which she now occupies in society.

Georgia has taken the lead in female education. You, her high-born sons, conceived the practicability of extending the benefits and privileges of collegiate training and culture to the female as well as to the male. When first the plan proposing such a benefit to our sex was made known to the public, it was ridiculed upon the one hand as a mere Utopian fancy; while upon the other it was roundly repudiated upon the baseless assumption that its tendencies would prove injurious. Notwithstanding, however, the strength and the prevalency of the opposition to this new theory of Female Education, and the well nigh fatal apathy and penuriousness of its friends, it survived—and survived to die never.

Doubtless the present modes of imparting instruction will be subject to some changes and modifications; but the ground gained will never be given up while man has a head to think, a heart to feel, and a hand to execute.

It received its first experimental and practical development in the institution now well and extensively known as the Wesleyan Female College. Only twenty years have been thrown into the past since the strange intelligence was heralded through the country that a veritable Female College, chartered by the State Legislature, had really gone into operation. But it had scarcely gone into operation before its practical work-

ing was admired, and its utility acknowledged. With it the spell was broken.

Since then what an astonishingly rapid change has taken place in the public mind. The errors, prejudices, and ignorance which had so long seemed to present an invincible barrier to a proper appreciation of woman's educational wants were attacked and dissipated; and if they still have an existence, they are only as the fragmentary mists of the morning—hovering over a land gilded by the increasing brilliance of an ascendant sun!

BELOVED COMPANIONS

Allow me to congratulate you upon your enviable position, and your exalted privileges. It was formerly regarded by the masses as a matter desirable, though not really necessary, that the male be subjected to a rigid intellectual training, in order that he might be fitted and qualified for the arduous duties and responsibilities of life; while the hapless female was supposed to be well freighted for times hazardous voyage if she possessed a knowledge of the lower branches of an English education, could "finger well" upon a stringed instrument, "construct a flower," paint and sketch. But, thank Heaven! that time with many of its mischievous errors and pernicious prejudices, has passed away! And a brighter day is dawning. Its morning light has already spread upon the mountain. The assumption that there is a radical difference in the mental endowments of the sexes has been refuted, and woman is no longer denied her right and title to the thorough cultivation and development of her intellectual faculties.

Let me point you onward, then, to the completion of your education; not that you are to attempt a thorough exploration of all the fields of literature, science and art. To attempt that would be vain; to accomplish it, impossible. Life is too short, ability too

meager, but the mind, the whole mind, should be educated. Of what use could half an arch be, or three-quarters, or nine-tenths? Could it support anything? The taste, the imagination, the fancy, the memory, the judgment, the reasoning powers—these, and still more than these, combine in the constitution of the human mind. If they are all brought out in bold, strong, and beautiful harmony and proportion, they shall form an intellectual arch whose key-stone shall be piety and whose culminating point shall be Heaven. Possessed of minds thus developed, mingling the resplendent rays of piety with the charms of genius and the blazing lights of science, you will inevitably be useful in society, and a blessing to the world.

RESPECTED AUDITORY

This is and *ought* to be a glad day to the citizens of Macon and surrounding country. This is and *ought* to be a joyous assemblage. And why not joyous? Within these halls dedicated to science, literature, and religion; fatherly dignity, matronly tenderness, maiden modesty and beauty, youthful pride and manhood, childhood's innocence and loveliness, all mingle and blend in sweet concord of sentiment and feeling.

All bespeak either in word or approving smile, approbation of the manner in which this institution has been conducted and gratitude to God for the very encouraging success that has marked its history. As Georgians, in viewing this broad commonwealth—its inexhaustible agricultural and mineral resources; the facilities which it affords its inhabitants for the procurement of life's comforts and luxuries, its bright skies; grand, beautiful and richly varied scenery; salubrious climate; and health-giving waters—our hearts dilate with gratitude to God for having cast our lot in such a goodly heritage. The increase of our population in number, wealth, and influence in the galaxy

of states forming this great confederacy, is matter of gratulation in popular assemblies, and furnishes the staple of many a public harangue. When the statesman, the stump orator, or the political demagogue would flatter the vanity, foster the pride, and cater to the tastes of our money-loving, money-getting, money-keeping people, he dwells with velvet lip and dulcet tongue upon magnificent internal improvements that have been projected and carried into effect by our industrious enterprising and preserving citizens.

Mind is excited, imagination fired, and fancy winged, when he speaks of our extensive and extending railways, valuable stocks, reliable banking companies, increasing exports, flourishing commerce, growing and fast multiplying towns and cities, wealthy mines, and richly waving harvests. And truly the abundant bequests of nature and of providence for us as the constituency of a free state, and the industry, progress and achievements of the generation past, and of those now occupying the stage, appear worthy of the poet's lyre and of the orator's tongue. We would not paralyze the one or strike dumb the other; but we would and do claim moral and intellectual progress and achievements as furnishing the theme for the poet's highest rhapsody, and orator's warmest, boldest, sublimest flight.

What are sunny skies, purling fountains, enchanting and richly varied scenery, agricultural and mineral resources, vast and increasing wealth, extensive railroads and flourishing towns and cities, in comparison with cultivated minds and correct morals? The one is as far superior to the other as the substance is to the shadow, as the mind is to matter, as the Creator is to the creature.

The genial sky, the streamlet with music in its flow, the ever changing landscape spread out in all the gorgeousness and delicacy of nature's own painting, the fertility of soil, and treasures of the mine are only appreciated and rendered subservient to the temporal

happiness, and eternal well-being of man by the conquest of mind over matter, actuated and controlled by correct moral views and principles. The commencement of all the great enterprises of the state, which are looked upon as our boast and our glory, are traceable to that period in our history at which the public mind was awakened to a sense of the importance of building up seminaries of learning at home—in the South; and educating well and wisely the sons and daughters of our land in the midst of circumstances and influences calculated to foster a love of our peculiar social and civil institutions.

I have said that this is and *ought* to be a glad day to the citizens of Macon. I repeat it: The institution which we now represent is one of the noblest monuments of your benevolence, your intelligence, and your enterprise. Rally to it. Patronize it. Support it. The cradle of its infancy was rocked by prejudices and opposition, and had it been born to die, its funeral obsequies would long since have been performed, and its epitaph would have been oblivion.

Wesleyan has survived all its embarrassments, and now unencumbered it leans upon your arm, and moves forward under your fostering care. Contribute to it money and prayers; increase its facilities; enlarge its influence, and elevate its character; give to its teachers an opportunity of shaping for your daughters a brilliant career and a high destiny; and then shall the institution ever be what it is now—an honor to the state, and a fruitful source of blessing to the people.

VII

FROM YOUNG LADYHOOD TO WIDOWHOOD

AFTER graduating from Wesleyan, Alice Culler went to LaGrange Female College at LaGrange, Georgia, where a course in graduate work had just been added to the curriculum.

The last night of the year 1858 found the girl writing in her diary. She first told of the graduation at Wesleyan and then continued:

I then bade adieu to Macon, to college, and to my dearest friends, feeling that the tenderest attachments my heart had ever formed were being rudely severed —feeling that I was to go out into the world and perform the part of a "young lady" for which I knew I was little qualified. My feelings revolted; my heart sickened at the idea.

I did not feel qualified to "guide my frail bark o'er life's troubled sea" without a pilot; so I went to LaGrange, and placed myself under the charge of those fully competent to instruct me. I am a member of the "Resident Graduate Class." I am here far away from home, from the loved ones, from Father, Mother and Sisters obtaining an education.

Time has flown rapidly. The last day, the last night, of 1858 is now rapidly passing away. To-morrow I will begin a new year. I would that the year would last a little longer; but its moments, which have run away like the golden sands in the hour glass of the past, are almost numbered.

The new year, whose coming Alice had wished to delay, brought a brighter hope than the girl had dreamed of. As Dr. W. M. Harris, the president of LaGrange College, watched the students of the new department he realized that one of them, at least, had in her the making of a real teacher. Some months later, after Alice had completed her studies, Dr. Harris was selecting teachers for the Martha Washington College of Abingdon, Virginia, of which he had just been made president. He had many teachers to secure as there was to be an entire change of faculty. His first step was to invite Alice Culler to go to the Virginia school, and such was his confidence in her ability that he offered her the choice of any position in the institution.

What was she like—this college teacher of sixteen? History does not answer; but certain traditions have come down which show how thoroughly human she was.

For one thing she was fond of dress—a fondness which went with her through life. She believed that it was a person's duty to look as well as possible; but it must be confessed that it was pleasure and not duty that reigned in her heart when she selected her clothes, for she instinctively loved beautiful things; and, like every other woman, she loved the consciousness of being well-dressed.

Another tradition of her life in Virginia concerns her popularity. The dreaming school girl awoke to find herself the popular young lady. She was

now at ease in the presence of cultured men, and was able to keep up a conversation with the cleverest of them. Moreover, her interest in the men around her was deepened by the thought that all of them were ready to do and to dare.

And there was much to dare; for the war clouds were beginning to gather over the South, and their shadow fell first in the Old Dominion. Alice heard many stirring speeches at political meetings, and witnessed much drilling of the state militia.

In the spring of 1860 plans were made for a great review of troops. It was to be part picnic and part preparation. The volunteers intended to be ready for whatever the future might bring. All the wives and sweethearts of the soldiers were invited to be present. From among these a sponsor was to be chosen whose privilege it would be to ride at the head of the troops and carry the flag.

When the great day came, it was Alice Culler of Georgia who rode at the head of the Virginia troops. More than a half century later, a gray-haired lady was speeding through that section of Virginia on a Pullman car. As the train reached a certain section, she peered eagerly out of the window and then touched her companion, saying, "It was here, Mary Culler, right here, I carried the flag."

A year later the war clouds had settled over the whole South. Alice's family would not allow her to return to Virginia. The times were too uncer-

tain. Everywhere the schools were becoming disorganized. Alice could not secure a position in Perry, and her family would not let her go away. So she settled down into what was, to her, the uncongenial state of unemployment.

Men from every community in the South had donned the gray uniform and marched away to war. Alice had watched her father and her friends go, and she had been left with a feeling of uselessness. If there were only some way in which she could help.

She was in this restless state of mind when she met the Reverend John K. Leak who was a graduate of Emory College, a teacher and a preacher. In him Alice found a congenial spirit, for he was as enthusiastic for the higher education of woman as was she. She felt a thrill when Mr. Leak told her that he had been elected to the presidency of Andrew Female College in Cuthbert, Georgia, and that he wanted her to go with him as his wife. She honored him for his learning and character; and, as he pressed his suit, she began to feel that she could work by his side.

There is a similar case in the experience of another Alice, who was also a great educator, Alice Freeman of Wellesley—later Alice Freeman Palmer. When Miss Freeman was but little more than an immature child, her hand was sought in marriage by a man who had helped her to find herself, both intellectually and spiritually. Moved upon by

Mid-Continent
BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

"dumb wonder and obedient esteem," she consented, for a time, to an engagement.

And so it was with the southern Alice. She told John Leak that she would marry him. The wedding took place in Perry on September 16, 1862, and the couple went immediately to Cuthbert where both plunged into the work of the college.

About five months later an epidemic broke out in the school. The doctors could not agree on a diagnosis; but advised the closing of school. This was done, and as soon as possible John Leak took his wife to Perry. There Dr. Culler received them; for by a turn in the war, he was temporarily at home. The refugees settled down thankfully in the peace and quiet of the Culler home; but news of the epidemic spread over the town, and in a few hours Dr. Culler was given to understand that his daughter and son-in-law must leave.

A little shanty was found outside the town limits, and to this the couple moved. The house was practically unfurnished. They had no servant; and neither knew how to cook. They passed the night in these surroundings and got up next morning to get breakfast. "I know how to make coffee," said John cheerfully. "And I," said Alice, "can boil an egg."

During that day Colonel Cobb came and took the couple to his place in the country. Alice's grandmother had died sometime before this, and Colonel Cobb had married again; but the new grandmother

willingly received the refugees into her home, and there were no neighbors to complain.

A day or two later Mr. Leak was taken ill. Dr. Culler went out and pronounced the case smallpox; and the young bride settled down to a grim fight with death. But it was a losing fight; and after ten days of exhaustive nursing on her part and excruciating suffering for the patient, the end came.

Immediately after Mr. Leak's death, Alice developed varioloid and became quite ill; but the quarantine was still in force and not even her mother was allowed to go to her. The following Sunday Mrs. Culler received a letter in which Alice said, "Nothing can express my feelings except the familiar lines from Thomas Moore:

'Oh, ever thus from childhood's hour
I've seen my fondest hopes decay;
I never loved a tree or flower,
But 'twas the first to fade away.

I never nursed a dear gazelle
To glad me with its soft black eye,
But when it came to know me well
And love me, it was sure to die.'"

This was indeed a dark hour in the life of Alice Culler. After only five months of married life, she found herself a widow at the age of nineteen.

VIII

ALICE BECOMES A TEACHER AT WESLEYAN

SLOWLY Alice regained her health, and tenderly the family received her back home. But her old interest in things was gone. Her relatives began to wish that she could find employment where she would have a complete change of scene. They had previously opposed her going away, but now all of them, including her grandfather, seemed to want her to go.

In the summer following Mr. Leak's death, a position at Wesleyan was offered her. It was the first thing that had aroused her interest. She felt that a great honor had been conferred upon her, and she accepted immediately. The catalogue of Wesleyan College for the year 1863-64 bore the name of Alice Leak in a modest place in the list of teachers; and under it, the title, Assistant in Literary and Music Departments. There was nothing to indicate that any notable acquisition to the faculty had been made; but the fact was that that name, or its equivalent, was destined to remain on the list of teachers in the Wesleyan catalogue for more than forty years, and was to climb steadily toward the top of the list.

A few months after Alice assumed her new duties, an added sorrow came into her life in the death of her grandfather. The indomitable old man had lived a full life, having kept up his law practice, superintended his farm, filled many preaching appointments, and attended to numerous public duties, including a mission to Belgium; and besides all this, he had found time to write two standard law books, a treatise on slavery, and a comprehensive work on theology.

He left his library to Alice, and the young college teacher prized the gift, but nothing could compensate for the loss of her grandfather. Death seemed ever present even in the safety of home. And outside it was worse, for the war was raging on. Mitt's lover had been killed. His body had been brought back to Perry for burial, together with those of two of his brothers. All three had been buried the same day; and the mother, standing beside the three new-made graves, had said, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Mitt said nothing. Something inside her had died.

The fighting was nearer now, and the outlook for the South less hopeful. The whole section had emptied itself of men, for old as well as young had gone away to the war. Alice's father was again with the army, acting as surgeon when he had the opportunity; and fighting as a private between times. All the wealth of the smiling, prosperous South was being exhausted in the effort to equip

and feed the hard-pressed soldiers at the front. Even in places untouched by the actual fighting everything was disorganized.

It was becoming increasingly hard to keep Wesleyan open. But President Bonnell and his faithful teachers were doing their best. The struggle was just the tonic Alice needed. She worked early and late, and with the work there came a blessed forgetfulness of her own sorrows.

When the war was over, the authorities of Wesleyan pointed with pride to an unbroken succession of graduating classes. They had "carried on."

But now came the equally difficult period of reconstruction. Every individual in the South had to begin all over, and learn how to live under the new conditions. Hope was dead; loved ones slain; money and property gone.

The South's greatest poet, Sidney Lanier—himself a Macon man, and an acquaintance of Mrs. Cobb's—became a keen sufferer through the reverses that came with reconstruction. He wrote his "Raven Days" at this time as a picture of the general desolation.

RAVEN DAYS

Our hearts are gone and our hearts are broken,
And but the ghosts of homes to us remain,
And ghastly eyes and hollow sighs give token
From friend to friend of an unspoken pain.

O Raven Days, dark Raven Days of sorrow,
Bring to us in your whetted ivory beaks
Some sign out of the far land of Tomorrow,
Some strip of sea-green dawn, some orange streaks.

Ye float in dusky files, forever croaking,
Ye chill our manhood with your dreary shade.
Dumb in the dark, not even God invoking,
We lie in chains, too weak to be afraid.

O Raven Days, dark Raven Days of sorrow,
Will ever any warm light come again?
Will ever the lit mountains of Tomorrow
Begin to gleam athwart the mournful plain?

But even in days as sad as these, a new order began to emerge from the ruins of the old. When prosperity took flight, some feared that the women of the South would be the greatest sufferers, since they had been the most protected. But the event proved that this was by no means universally the case.

For twenty-five years Wesleyan had been turning out trained college women who were scattered all over the South; and for a lesser period other institutions had been doing the same thing. When the crisis came, and ease was no longer possible, these women were ready. The men had fought during the war; but it remained for the women to fight *after* the war.

One of Wesleyan's daughters who was ready for the new conditions was Mary Culler, Alice's mother. Her husband was a better doctor than he was a collector. When their farms had been bringing in money, this had made no difference. But now it was a serious matter; for with slaves freed and overseers gone, hands difficult to get, and still more difficult to manage, the farms were proving a liability rather than an asset; and the family was

actually in debt. Emma, the youngest daughter, was married about this time; but that did not relieve the situation for other members of the family. It was at this crisis that Mrs. Culler came to the rescue. She did not try to change her husband. She changed herself. The story of what she did is told in letters which she wrote at this time to her school-teacher daughter. In one letter, written from Perry on March 17, 1869, she says:

I am having my corn planted "a la Dixon," and I hope to reap "a la" the same. I have changed the rarefied air of my room for the fresh breezes of Heaven; the carpet, for a softer one of plowed ground; and my rocking chair, for a stump in the field. I have a quiet time all to myself; and spend it reading the "Cultivator," knitting, and looking at the hands work.

In another paragraph Mrs. Culler reveals the object towards which she is working:

By and by I hope you will be able to give up your business and return to a plentiful home. To be able to offer you such a home is the greatest incentive of my untiring efforts. I want first to redeem your father's papers, and then make you and Mitt comfortable at home. Should I live and have my present health, with the blessing of Heaven, I expect to do it. Then you must consent to be no longer a stranger in our midst, but to come back and stay with us.

Mrs. Culler's cheerful spirit and quaint humor are shown in another communication sent to Alice about this time by the hand of her daughter, Mitt. All mail from Perry had to be carried a distance of ten miles, to the town of Fort Valley, by hand.

This note shows some of the difficulties of getting letters off:

Good-evening, Miss Alice, good-evening! I just drop in a moment to say I hope you are quite well, and that your "business man" had not the time this week to send in her "Weekly." She thought, too, as Miss Mitt was going up with me, there would be no use in my carrying any of the local news. She says she wants to see you, Oh so much! and will try to "steal a while away" from her numerous, numberless cares when Miss Mittie gets back, and the cotton is planted, and the cane is up, and the rice is in the ground, and the potatoes set out, and—and—well, I don't know what all she said; but I know she said she had lots to do, and the garden fence to build, and the porch to put up, and—something else. But I couldn't wait, for Miss Mitt was hurrying me up so that I thought I should be left; and I knew I couldn't come today if I didn't go with her, for I am too small to travel by myself; and old Mr. Gordon is a queer old man, and can't be persuaded to go to Fort Valley only on certain days: and today is not one of them.

Your mother sends you a little cake which she says you must eat with a relish, for she has nothing else to send you this time. She sends a great deal of love to all her friends; Mrs. Bass, Mrs. Bonnell, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. deGraffenreid; and I don't know how many others she would have mentioned if I had had time to wait. But I couldn't; so here I am, with quite enough of a bundle for as small a Messenger as——

"A Little Note."

And this was Mary, a representative of the first group of students that had gone out from Wesleyan; Mary, the tender and wise mother of the widowed Alice; and Mary, a maker of the new South. Happy the section that had provided a college to make Mary ready.

IX

ALICE MARRIES MAJOR COBB AND BECOMES A HOMEMAKER

MRS. CULLER'S desire for Alice to return home to live was not to be gratified. For one thing, Alice was growing more and more interested in her work. When she joined the faculty at Wesleyan, she began teaching in the preparatory department; but she did not remain there long. Each year saw her climbing to some more responsible position. When she had been a teacher at Wesleyan for five years, and was twenty-five years old, she was assigned the difficult task of correcting the senior essays that were to be read at commencement. The catalogue still said that "Dr. Somebody-or-other" was the professor of "Belles Lettres," but the students were in doubt as to who "Belle" was and where her "Lettres" were taught. None of them, however, had any doubt as to who filled the chair of "Alice's Letters"; and to the occupant of that chair they took their pet themes to have them polished for commencement.

A year or two later an important class in rhetoric was given to Alice to teach. The text book was *Bonnell's Manual* by Dr. John M. Bonnell, who was at that time the president of Wesleyan. This

was one of the first rhetorics ever written, and was an epoch-making book in the pedagogical world. The author had taught this book himself at Wesleyan for several years; but through pressure of work, he was forced to give up the chair of rhetoric.

One day he dropped into Mrs. Leak's classroom to see how she was getting on with her new class. When he came out he felt like James Lane Allen did when the latter heard a teacher of expression give a recital from his writings. "I didn't know," said Allen, "that all *that* was in my stories."

What Dr. Bonnell said was, "Mrs. Leak can beat me all to pieces, teaching *my own* book."

Alice's success as a teacher was but a stimulant to her energies. Far into the night she worked, correcting essays and preparing lessons; but she was happy and satisfied. Not even her mother's letters could tempt her to give up teaching and to go home. She had found the thing that she could do, and she knew that she wanted to do it—always.

But just at this time something happened which might have shaken the determination of any one else, for it was not possible that so young and attractive a woman should have remained unsought.

The old catalogue of Wesleyan College for the year 1866 shows the name of Mildred L. Cobb as a pupil in the preparatory department. At that time Alice Leak was still an instructor in that department; and it chanced that twelve-year-old Mildred

fell in love with her teacher. Mildred was a day pupil, and when she went home in the evening she would talk to her father and her brother about the object of her affections. "You ought to know my teacher," she said to her father, looking past the place where her mother's chair was vacant. "You just must know her. She is so lovely."

Mildred's father was Major John B. Cobb, who had been a gallant officer of the Confederate army, and who was a member of a distinguished Georgia family. His brother, General Howell Cobb, who had been one of the most famous leaders of the Southern forces bore the exact name of Alice's grandfather, but the two men belonged to different families.

Major Cobb was engaged in the insurance business in Macon and was a member of Mulberry Street Church to which Alice also belonged. Urged on by his little daughter, and favored by the fact that he and Alice were teachers in the same Sunday school; Major Cobb made the acquaintance of the attractive young widow, and was soon deeply in love with her.

But he found that conquest would not be easy, for he had a number of rivals. And Alice was treating them with cool impartiality. To her it was a wonderful time—more like the old care free days in Virginia than anything she had known in the sad years that had intervened. She was in no sense a flirt; but she enjoyed the society of clever men.

She liked to match her intellect with theirs, or just to sit and listen while they discussed the latest books, or the affairs of the day. Yes—and she liked to be liked.

But things grew more serious, and the matter was narrowed down to two. After a time the young teacher was able to read her own heart. If she married anyone, it would be Major Cobb; but immediately a new problem confronted her. If she married she would be expected to give up her teaching, and that she was not willing to do. She felt that she had a work to do in the world, and that this was her way of doing it. She could not give up her profession—not even for the sake of her lover.

Alice was far enough in advance of her times to believe that there was no incongruity in a woman's following her bent for a career, and filling a wife's place in the home at the same time; but she did not know a single person who shared her views. This was the year 1870, and there were no precedents—at least, not in the South—to point the way.

Finally, Alice decided to lay the whole matter before Major Cobb. If he could see her viewpoint, and would agree to enter into a marriage contract which provided that she could go on with her teaching she would marry him; but if he objected, she would have to give him up. So she opened her heart to her lover, and to her intense relief, she met with nothing but sympathy and encouragement.

Major Cobb gently assured her that he wanted all of her powers to come to their full maturity, and that if she felt she ought to continue to teach, he was willing to make the contract which she desired.

It was thus that Alice Culler found her true mate, one who could share her innermost feelings. They were quietly married in the autumn of that year in the village church at Perry.

A home was established on Bond Street in Macon with four members in the family; Major and Mrs. Cobb, Mildred—or Millie, as she was called in the home—and Jim, a little boy of eleven. The children of the neighborhood greeted Millie and Jim with the usual taunts about having a stepmother, but Millie effectually silenced them by replying: "I haven't a stepmother. I have a second mother."

This loyal attitude was held by both Millie and Jim throughout their lives. Many years afterwards Millie said: "Mother never let Jim and me feel that she was a stepmother at all. Just a few years ago Jim was asked to make a 'Mother's Day' address and he made a splendid speech by taking our mother for a text and telling of her influence over his life."

Mrs. Cobb appreciated this devotion, but she always claimed that she deserved no credit for loving her stepchildren, because Major Cobb's characteristics of gentleness, thoughtfulness, and unselfish-

ness were strongly marked in both children when she entered the home.

One day, long afterwards, while she was traveling in Europe, she paused in her sight-seeing to remark, somewhat irrelevantly, to her companion, "The best people I know in the world are Millie and Jim."

All of this mutual admiration and devotion had its beginning in those early days on Bond Street when the young mother of this ready-made family was learning how to look after Millie's health and Millie's clothes, Jim's table manners, and Jim's finger nails.

The time of day that all the family like best was the evening. It was then that they would sit around the living room fire with the mother rocking and studying, the father reading the newspaper, and the children either studying or poring over some story book. As Alice began to adjust her habits to this free and easy family atmosphere, she found that she would have to learn the art of concentration. And this she did. Before very long she could focus her mind on any subject, and be oblivious to what went on around her.

But she did not stay focused all the time; for she found that the quiet man on the other side of the lamp was well informed, especially on matters of history; and that he could often assist her when she needed to know who was the "third cousin of the Arch-Duke of Something"; or when she was

obliged to make a hurried chase after some runaway date. Major Cobb was more than fulfilling the prenuptial contract. He was taking an active interest in her work.

It might be well to stop this chapter here; for there are some things that seem too sacred to mention. And yet, if these intimate things are not recorded, the reader will be left in ignorance of one of the most potent influences in Alice Cobb's life; namely, her husband's chivalrous devotion to her, and his unshakable confidence in her ability. He was a gentleman of the old school, and as such he daily performed many humble services which contributed to his wife's comfort. It was not that she wished it so, but he would not have it otherwise.

And twice every day he walked with her from their home to the college gate. This took him far out of his way, and there were no street cars to shorten the distance from the college to his office. But this walk with his sweetheart-wife was the highest experience that half of the day brought to him; and nothing could have stopped him from taking it.

Perhaps he divined that he was the Chanticleer, and she was the Dawn. What mattered the extra exertion if he reaped the joy of her society, and the world reaped the benefit of the dawn?

X

THE COMING OF THE BABIES

DR. CULLER was in the home on Bond Street looking very grave. Miss Mitt was there, too, moving swiftly about; but Miss Mitt was nervous, and her hands trembled as she tried to put things to rights. The one who managed the home was ill. Down, down she went to the very gates of death; but there she turned and started slowly up again bringing a life back with her own.

The Cobb family now had a new center. Miss Mitt signed away her freedom immediately by becoming the newcomer's body-servant; while Millie, who was now a young lady, signed on as first assistant to the body-servant.

The mother was very weak and ill, but as soon as she could speak, she said, "We will call the baby Mary Culler. I want to name her for mother." Nobody answered, for they were all thinking of a new made grave down in the moss-hung cemetery in Perry. The brave Mrs. Culler had had to lay down her work.

Little Mary Culler Cobb arrived in January, 1874; but her mother's strength did not return for many months. It was evident that there would be

no hours of teaching for her that year. But Mrs. Cobb knew that her days in the school room were not over; so "she settled her faith into the keeping of patience, and sat down and waited." And as she waited, she helped in various ways with the college work. When commencement time drew near, she had the students send their theme books to her; and there at home, propped up with pillows, she corrected and revised until twenty-nine commencement essays were in shape to be read.

About the time that the baby had her first birthday Mrs. Cobb was able to resume her duties at the college. There was a year of uninterrupted teaching, and then another absence. In March, 1876, the second wee stranger came into the home.

Auntie Mitt had a "Sunday name" that she never wore—not even on Sundays and at Christmas. It was kept locked up in the bandbox of her trunk where she kept her checkbook. But with the advent of the new baby, this name, which was Eugenia, was taken out, dusted off, and bestowed upon the newcomer. When little Eugenia, or Genie as she came to be known, was five months old, Mrs. Cobb again resumed her work at the college.

But some will ask how a young mother with two children could keep up a full program of college teaching and not neglect her babies and her home. The answer to this question is Auntie Mitt; Auntie Mitt and—Millie. Back of every person who is in the public eye is some humbler soul, who stands

between the famous one and the drudgery of life. Back of the self-made man is his self-effacing wife. Back of the well-known woman is some unknown one, who has elected to be, not a visible personality, but a voice—perhaps just a whisper—in the wilderness. The hidden one must decrease, that the great one may increase, but the hidden one is content.

Miss Mitt, endowed by nature with a strong personality; and a flashing wit, never recovered from the blow that the war had dealt her. Deprived of the possibility of a home of her own and the joys of motherhood, she chose a shut-in life. When the home in Perry was broken up, she came to live with her sister, Mrs. Cobb; but she seldom left the house, and she found her highest joy in being "Auntie," first to Alice's children, and gradually to all the children of her acquaintance.

Millie, too, preferred the quiet of the home to any other sphere. Her only selfish act consisted in being so unselfish that she was in danger of monopolizing that virtue and forcing other people into selfishness. So when Millie found that by quiet ministrations in the home she could make possible a fuller life for her gifted mother, she made her choice at once, and never for a moment did she regret it.

So back of Alice Cobb there were two, not one, of these self-effacing souls.

XI

A NEW ALICE OF WONDERLAND

"WHEN Mrs. Cobb said to me, 'Annie, I want you to do so and so,' I did it. It did not matter whether I could do it or not; or whether I thought it could be done or not; I did it. It was like the story in Uncle Remus where Brer Rabbit escapes from a difficulty by climbing a tree. The Little Boy objected, saying, 'But, Uncle Remus, rabbits don't climb trees.' To which the old man replied, 'Honey, Brer Rabbit was jist ableeged to climb dat tree, an' he clum it.' That was my experience at Wesleyan. What Mrs. Cobb said for me to do, I did. I was ableeged to climb the tree, and I clum it.' "

So said Annie Cargill (now Mrs. Ed F. Cook) as she tried to describe the power of Mrs. Cobb's personality over her pupils. But in this story she was unconsciously speaking, not for herself alone, but for hundreds of other girls who had a similar experience.

To these students Mrs. Cobb became the Alice of the Wesleyan Wonderland. In the old fairy story Alice of Wonderland entered the enchanted regions by following a rabbit *down, down, down!* But at Wesleyan these students found in Mrs. Cobb a new

Alice of Wonderland—one who stood by the portal of the enchanted region of Education, Opportunity, Achievement, Faith, and pointing to the rabbit and the tree bade them find their Wonderland by following the rabbit *up, up, up!*

In further illustration of how the magic of Mrs. Cobb's personality worked upon her life, Mrs. Cook said:

> After I left college, Mrs. Cobb singled me out and drew me into the work of the Conference Missionary Society, where I held the office of Recording Secretary for six years, and later was press superintendent. Still later I was drawn into the larger work of the Woman's Board where I was again associated with Mrs. Cobb. I was Recording Secretary of this body for a number of years and at the suggestion of Mrs. Cobb, I wrote a book of "Plans for Young People's Work." I was always timid, but I was impelled in these various activities, to follow wherever Mrs. Cobb pointed the way. It was just as it had been in the old days at Wesleyan: I was "ableeged to climb the tree!"

Out of the many students whose lives were inspired by contact with Mrs. Cobb during this period, two others have been selected because of their long and intimate association with Mrs. Cobb, and because of their outstanding achievements in the work which they undertook.

The first of these is Mrs. George W. Mathews (formerly Annie MacDonell) who has lately resigned from the presidency of the Woman's Missionary Society of the South Georgia Conference, after having held that office for twenty-six years.

Mrs. Mathews thus describes the beginning of Mrs. Cobb's influence over her life:

Mrs. Cobb was held in awe by most of her pupils, but an incident happened during my first year under her that swept away all fear, and forever enshrined her in my heart.

One day during a recitation period my book accidentally fell open on my desk. I was both humiliated and frightened for fear Mrs. Cobb would consider me dishonest, so plucking up what little courage I possessed, I went to her and made a timid explanation. Her answer was a radiant smile and an assurance of her entire confidence in me. On that day I registered in my heart the purpose never to disappoint her. The wall of awe and fear had crumbled and henceforth she was to me a loved teacher and sympathetic friend.

The second student to be mentioned on whom the magic of Mrs. Cobb's personality wrought its spell was little Tochie Williams, later Mrs. Robert W. MacDonell, one of the foremost missionary workers of the Methodist Church. Mrs. MacDonell has written an account of her early impressions of Mrs. Cobb, which furnishes an illuminating commentary on this entire period of Mrs. Cobb's life:

The first time I ever saw Mrs. Cobb was on the Sunday following her marriage to Major Cobb. I was a little girl about nine years old, and I had often heard my parents speak of the charming young teacher; but I had never seen her until that Sunday in Mulberry Street Church. How fascinated I was when I found myself seated in the pew directly behind the bride and groom! Mrs. Cobb wore a lustrous brown silk dress, and an adorable hat with a brown ostrich

plume which hung over the brim in the back. At the close of the service eager friends gathered around to offer congratulations, and as Mrs. Cobb bowed, the plume nodded sympathetically behind, where its graceful motion held my gaze transfixed. A few moments later when the wearer turned and I caught a glimpse of her face, I surrendered to her charm. I have never known one whose eyes were fuller of expression or whose face disclosed the inner life more perfectly. I registered a vow that Sunday morning that I would have a brown dress with hat and plume to match when I married, and that I would bow and smile exactly as I had seen Mrs. Cobb do that day. I wanted to look like her and be like her all the days of my life.

In memory of that day I persuaded my mother to let me have a brown silk frock in my graduation trousseau, and I selected one as nearly as possible like the one I had seen Mrs. Cobb wear. I was not willing to wait for such an uncertain event as my marriage.

The acme of my desire was reached when I was old enough to enter Wesleyan College, because I was then able to see my "fair lady" every day, and to sit under the sound of her voice.

One day early in spring a servant deposited a beautiful pot of white azalias in full bloom on Mrs. Cobb's desk. I can recall even now the wonderful look of admiration and even tenderness that beamed through every line of Mrs. Cobb's face. With this look of holy admiration on her face, she seemed to me not less beautiful than the pot of flowers that was before her. Both were creations of the Master's hand.

When Mrs. Cobb's daughters, Mary and Genie, came, the stamp of holy motherhood was placed upon her brow. One day as I sat in the old study hall at the college, the door opened and the baby Genie was brought in. She was a wee, cuddly thing—a dainty miniature of her mother. Mrs. Cobb rose at her desk and stood with out-stretched arms to receive the baby

who nestled down in perfect satisfaction on her breast. And then I saw once more that look of holy admiration come into Mrs. Cobb's face, just as I had seen it when the pot of azalias had been brought in. But this time the tenderness in the look was deeper. Her face was softened as well as glorified. Afterwards I learned that this expression of rapt admiration was almost habitual with Mrs. Cobb in her contact with children. And children intuitively loved her.

Before I had been at Wesleyan very long, I became aware of Mrs. Cobb's ability as a teacher. No one ever made the English language so easy to master as did she. The world would have been sadly cheated if she had given up her profession when she married.

I found, too, that she knew just how to deal with a girl who was passing through the difficult period of adolescence; for, despite my abject devotion to "my dear Mrs. Cobb," there came a day when she was forced to call me to order in the study hall. I resented the kindly correction and proceeded with more determined misbehavior.

"Tochie Williams, sit at your desk, open your book and study your lesson," came to my rebellious ears. I wheeled into position, folded my arms and stared at her during the remainder of that period; but she appeared not to see me, and as the hours wore on I came to myself with a humiliating sense of shame. As soon as she was at her desk the next morning I went to her to plead for pardon. How calm and detached she seemed as she listened.

"Please don't let it make you like me less," I begged; but she looked into my eyes and answered coolly.

"All depends upon your future conduct," she said. This poise on her part was exactly what I needed to bring me out of my hysterical frame of mind. The scene which might have been precipitated had she dared to show the sympathy she felt was skillfully avoided; and I was made to realize that there was a standard of conduct to which I must strive to attain.

My whole being leaped up in eager response to the challenge thus given. On that day in the church when, as a little girl, I had seen Mrs. Cobb for the first time, I had wanted to be like her and look like her all the days of my life; but now I went a step further and longed to be, not simply like her, but like the woman that she wanted me to be. And this deeper desire has been with me from that day to this.

XII

CLASSROOM METHODS, INCIDENTS, AND ANECDOTES

MRS. COBB had a sense of humor. One story that had been handed down at Wesleyan, she especially enjoyed. The incident happened in the early days of the college when students were expected to answer in the words of the book. One day in class a teacher of rhetoric asked the question, "What are the two elements of the sublime?" The answer in the book was: "The solemn and the terrible." But the student who was being interrogated was not prepared. She gave a distress signal to a classmate, who tried to help her by whispering the answer; but the unfortunate girl heard wrong, and instead of replying "The solemn and the terrible" answered sweetly, "Solomon and the devil."

Mrs. Cobb often told this story to her class. But she did not need to point the moral; for Solomon and the devil never stalked through her classroom—at least, not together. Solomon was welcome if he came in honorably *by the door;* but not if he brought a sneaking companion with him. In other words, there was no cheating. The discipline was complete. It is hard to analyze Mrs. Cobb's power

as a teacher. It was something to be felt rather than to be explained. But this much is certain: almost every student at Wesleyan, no matter how dull, brought her well-prepared lessons. In the bosom of her family, Mrs. Cobb confessed that she never knew which girls were considered the good students, and which, the poor ones, until the close of each semester when the faculty met to make out the reports. The reason of this ignorance was because all of the students had studied hard in her classes.

The motives which inspired the students to study so hard for her were undoubtedly different in different cases.

With some it was fear. Mrs. Cobb's rebukes could sting for a lifetime, and her sarcasm cut like a surgeon's knife. After undergoing one operation, the patient usually kept out of the surgical ward. There is one woman in Georgia who never uses the word "awfully" to denote "excessively." She used it that way once in Mrs. Cobb's presence, saying that she was "awfully glad" about something; but immediately she was "awfully sorry," and she has been so ever since.

Another Wesleyan student avoids the expression "enjoyed myself" as one would avoid a rattle snake. She was once telling someone with great enthusiasm that she had "enjoyed herself" when Mrs. Cobb broke in and showed her that what she had enjoyed was not *herself,* but the entertainment that had been

provided. That student has never attempted to "enjoy herself" again.

With other students the motive which induced them to work was interest in the subject being taught. Was it literature? Mrs. Cobb varied her methods from day to day and year to year, so that there was never any monotony. She loved the classics herself and she was able to make her characters in literature seem like living people to her students.

Was the subject English composition? Mrs. Cobb found out what each student was interested in and had her write on that subject. What had been a burden now became a delight. Once she had an irrepressible tomboy in her class who seemed to have no gift for writing. Mrs. Cobb assigned to this girl the topic, "The Thraldom of Girldom to the Word Proper," and the result was a lively essay and the discovery of a buried talent.

But with other students—the more imaginative and gifted ones—the impelling motive was *love*. They saw in Mrs. Cobb the greatest personality that they had ever known, and they worshiped at her shrine. They eagerly did her bidding, no matter how impossible seemed the task. These were the ones who became the nimblest tree-climbers—the sharers of Alice Cobb's Wonderland. Some of these students have furnished incidents which illustrate the power of Mrs. Cobb's personality. A number of these are given below:

From Mrs. Dorothy Blount Lamar:

Mrs. Cobb's rectitude and high standards builded character daily in those about her, for she inspired them to emulate her virtues, and to feel with her that "There is never a moment's truce between vice and virtue, that goodness is the only investment that never fails."

From Miss Lucy Lester:

No one who sat under Mrs. Cobb's instruction could fail to be impressed by her personality. Even as a schoolgirl I sensed those qualities which I now recognize as the endowment of all real teachers, a high purpose and lofty ideals, combined with a vision and leadership that made her a potent influence in the lives of her students.

Mrs. Cobb also had a sense of humor, and this made her very human in her contact with the girls, and permitted no dull moments in her class-room. When I think of her I recall a little grey-haired woman with flashing eyes, eyes that, although she had known sorrow—never grew dim. Hers was a valiant spirit.

From Mrs. Katie Martin Roberson:

Mrs. Cobb often said, "I never allow a student to tell me that she is not prepared. Each girl must rise and recite when she is called on, and I will soon discover for myself whether or not she is prepared." One day there was a paragraph in the lesson that I could not learn. As fate and Mrs. Cobb would have it, I was called on for that paragraph. I got up, and she "soon discovered for herself" that I did not know it. The next day she called on me for the same paragraph. I still did not know it, for I thought that the danger had passed. But I took no chances the third day. I learned that paragraph."

From M. C. W.:

There was one injunction in the Bible which Mrs. Cobb obeyed implicitly. It was this: "Reprove, rebuke, exhort . . .

From Miss Anna Smith:

Like everyone else I was afraid of Mrs. Cobb when I was a student under her; but I came to know that she was just. She reproved me privately and not publicly; and I felt that even her severity was for my good.

After my graduation she won my heart to a deeper loyalty by an act of social courtesy. A person's social standing in the community was established by the status of those who called on her, and a young person was always pleased to receive a call from an older lady of good standing. Shortly after I graduated Mrs. Cobb came to my home, dressed in her best clothes, and paid me a formal call. I was more impressed and elated than I would have been had the Queen of England called to see me. It was an event in the family, and for days thereafter I went around with my head in the clouds.

From Mrs. Lizzie Mangham Hill:

Mrs. Cobb is responsible for my having an education at all. My other teachers made me want to jump out of the window; but she never did.

From Mrs. Mattie Tarbutton Harris:

My heart was nearly broken in my junior year because I failed to get a speaker's place. My friend, R. T., and I were debarred by the fact that we were irregular juniors; but we had not realized this, and so we were hoping for the best. Mrs. Cobb must have

realized our state of mind, for she came to us before the list of speakers was made public, and explained the whole situation, thus preparing us for the disappointment that was in store. It was a very kind thing to do; but then she did so many kind things. Every time she spoke to me out of class I made note of it in my journal.

From Mrs. Annie MacDonell Mathews:

I was a day pupil, and when my classes were over I used to walk home with Mrs. Cobb, and stand on the street corner talking with her, and feeling immensely important because of even that slight association with one so great.

From Miss Margie Burks:

Two things stand out in my mind that mark Mrs. Cobb as a great teacher. One day she was trying to impress upon us the value of individuality in literary taste. She said: "Don't feel that you have to blindly accept all that the critics say and make your appraisements accordingly. Be original. Dare to express your opinion, even when you differ from the critics. I am here as your teacher; but I am not ashamed to tell you that I have never read David Copperfield. I never could get any further than "I was born."

When I heard Mrs. Cobb say this, I was astounded. I was only a pupil, yet I had read all of Dickens and of Thackeray. How could she, a teacher of literature, say that she had never read David Copperfield?

That was the way I felt about it then; but since I have been a teacher myself I have learned to feel differently. I have taught in high school and in college, where I have had occasions to use this incident again and again in dealing with the many types of mind that have come under my care.

The other incident which makes me know that Mrs. Cobb was a great teacher is this: One day when I was in her class she assigned a long lesson for the next day. It required hard work and careful research; but when she concluded the assignment she astonished us by saying "A noted man is to lecture in Macon tonight. I want every one of you to go hear him." We looked at her completely mystified, for the two things seemed irreconcilable—a long lesson to be learned, and a lecture to be attended! Mrs. Cobb smiled at our puzzled looks and said: "Yes, I mean it. I want every one of you to hear this man tonight, for contact with literary people constitutes a vital part of your education."

Then Mrs. Cobb went on to explain: "When I was a young girl here at Wesleyan," she said, "Thackeray came to Macon and lectured, illustrating his lecture with his own inimitable drawings. I heard that he was coming and was eager to hear him. But my teachers had assigned heavy lessons for the next day, and I was so young and inexperienced that I could not measure values. The nearest and least attractive duty seemed to my schoolgirl mind the most important. So I stifled my desires, and stayed at home. There was no one at hand to tell me what I am telling you now. Hence I missed hearing Thackeray and never had the opportunity again. Something was lost out of my life that night that I have never been able to recover. For this reason I say to you now what I wish someone had said to me then: Neglect your lessons if you have to; but don't fail to hear the man of genius who will lecture in your city tonight."

XIII

DR. ALLEN CONVERTS MRS. COBB TO A BELIEF IN FOREIGN MISSIONS

SPRINGTIME 1878. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in session in Atlanta. At this meeting a little group of far-seeing women brought forward a memorial asking for the establishment of a Woman's Board of Foreign Missions. A timid plea for such a Board had been refused by the General Conference of four years previously, but now the women were surer of their ground. "A cultured young woman, versed in foreign languages" had offered herself for mission work in China; and the women already had in hand the money to pay her passage to the field. All they asked was that the General Conference would please let them have a *Board;* so that the women of the church in America might be banded together, in a legal way, to work for the women of other lands.

The plea was pushed by a determined group of women, three of whom had influence powerful enough to reach into that citadel of Methodism, the College of Bishops. Each of the three was the wife of a bishop! History does not explain just

how it was brought about but the General Conference decided to be "good" and let the women have what they wanted. Perhaps the three bishops knew that this was the only pathway to peace in their domestic relations. At any rate, the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions was duly authorized and soon became a chartered organization with a central office in Nashville, Tennessee. One of the first acts of this Board was to commission their young candidate, Miss Lochie Rankin, and send her to China. Then they set about establishing auxiliaries all over the church so as to raise money to carry on the work.

Down in Macon, Georgia, Mrs. Cobb read of these things in the church papers, but they meant nothing to her.

The fact was that Mrs. Cobb was not interested in foreign missions. College education for women, and the proper care of the home—these were her interests, and they took all her time. Moreover, Major Cobb, like many other people of his day, was openly opposed to foreign missions. So with the wife apathetic and the husband antagonistic, the heathen were not likely to receive much help at the hands of the Cobb family.

About this time Dr. J. O. Branch, the faithful pastor of Mulberry Street Church, preached a sermon in which he said that a person who did not believe in foreign missions was not a Christian.

At the close of the service, someone came up to

Mrs. Cobb and said, "Well, Mrs. Cobb, what have you to say to that?" The reply came with dignity: "I say that Major Cobb is just as good a man as Dr. Branch and that he has just as much right to his opinion."

At the Wesleyan commencement of that year there was to be a meeting of the alumnae, and the speaker for the occasion was to be Dr. Young J. Allen, of Shanghai, who had come to America to attend the General Conference. This was the first time that Dr. Allen had been in the States since his departure for China twenty years before. Mrs. Cobb was interested in the prospects of seeing the husband of her friend, Mollie Houston; and she wrote and invited Dr. Allen to be her guest while he was in Macon. The invitation was gladly accepted.

"How many children have you and Mollie now?" asked Mrs. Cobb as she and her distinguished visitor were driving from the station to the house.

"Five," answered Dr. Allen; but he hesitated a little as he said it. An hour later, when he had read the great pile of forwarded mail that was waiting for him in his room, he said: "I was mistaken in what I said just now. We have six children. The mail from China, received to-day, has brought the news of the arrival of a baby girl."

That night after the exercises at the college, Major and Mrs. Cobb settled themselves for a nice long talk with their guest. They were ever a pair

of night owls, and in Dr. Allen they found one who loved the "wee sma' hours" as much as they did.

Major Cobb did not smoke, but since he was a hospitable man, he kept a box of cigars in the living room closet for the use of the preachers who frequented the home. This box was brought out for Dr. Allen's use and while he smoked, he talked.

First, in answer to their questions, he spoke of the family, and of the hard experience they had had going out to China in a sailing vessel that was seven months on the way. But soon he began to speak of China and the work he was doing there—China with its ancient civilization, its love of culture, and its reverence for education. "We have established many street chapels and day schools," he said, "but we are not reaching the higher classes. We must establish a real college that will offer courses in English as well as in Chinese; then we will get as many pupils as we can teach, and get them from the higher classes."

"What about the girls?" asked Mrs. Cobb.

"There are very few of any size in our mission schools," replied Dr. Allen, "but that is because our schools have not been good enough to attract the girls from high class families. It will be different in the future." And then he told her about the General Conference and the wonderful forward step which the women of the church were taking in the establishment of a Woman's Board of Foreign Missions.

"The sending of Miss Rankin and of other women missionaries to China," he continued, "will mean that we can go forward and establish well-equipped schools for girls; and as soon as we do this, the girls will come. Many Chinese women are longing for an education and the blessings which Christianity has to bring."

There was something in this reply that sounded strangely familiar to Mrs. Cobb. It was like the things that she was always saying about the education of girls in America. What if all the world were kin after all?

On that first night they talked about China until two hours after midnight; the next night it was the same way; and the third found Major and Mrs. Cobb still listening with fascinated interest while Dr. Allen told of his work and his plans.

When the visitor from China went away, he left behind him in that home two lifelong friends and two enthusiastic converts to the cause of foreign missions.

But the admiration was not all on the side of the host and hostess. Dr. Allen wrote to his wife with much enthusiasm about her friends whom he had been visiting, and suggested that their little new baby in China should be called Alice after Mrs. Cobb. The suggestion was followed, and from that time forward a new bond sealed the friendship of the two families.

XIV

THE WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

SOME months previous to Dr. Allen's visit, the pastor of Mulberry Street Church had organized a missionary society. About twenty women joined, but Mrs. Cobb was not among the members. The organization flourished at first, but soon dwindled to the faithful few. The old book of minutes which is still in the possession of the society, tells a dismal story of the attendance—or the lack of it—during the latter part of that first year. Here are some of the entries:

"August 1878. A quorum not being present, no business was transacted."

"October 22, 1878. A quorum not being present, the meeting resolved itself into an Executive Committee Session."

"November 19, 1878. Present, five ladies. The weather was very inclement, and a quorum not being present, the regular business could not be transacted; but it was determined on the suggestion of the pastor, to appropriate fifty dollars more to the China mission."

No minutes were kept for December; but an entry, evidently made toward the close of the year, gives the list of the new members who had been added to the roll. Among these names was

that of Mrs. J. B. Cobb. Dr. Allen's visit was bearing fruit.

A year later, the new recruit was elected a delegate from the Mulberry Missionary Society to a conference that was to be held in Perry for the purpose of organizing a Conference Missionary Society. The object of the new society was to link up the scattered auxiliaries with each other and with the Woman's Board in Nashville.

Mrs. Cobb went to the meeting in Perry a plain delegate; she returned the president of the conference society.

This elevation to a place of leadership in the missionary work of her conference marked an epoch in the life of Alice Cobb. Her conversion to the cause of missions had been most timely following, as it did, closely upon the organization of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions. That Board, progressive as were the ideas upon which it was founded, would have been helpless without effective women leaders in the various conferences of the church.

Mrs. Cobb had "come into the kingdom for such a time as this." There were women in the churches all over her state who had been her devoted pupils. These would follow her leadership more readily than that of anyone else. For this reason the Holy Spirit guided the election in that unpretentious, yet potential meeting in Perry, and sent Alice Cobb out therefrom a leader to all the women of her church.

She had been born in that quiet village thirty-six years before. There, in her girlhood she had been "born again" through personal faith in Jesus Christ. But now in the maturity of her splendid powers she had come back there to be born into a deeper realm of concentrated service than she had ever known.

From that time forward she still worked with all her accustomed zeal for the cause of the higher education of women; but she also labored with equal earnestness for a new and broader objective—the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the darkened lands of the world. She had entered one of the inner portals of Wonderland and was destined to lead many in after her.

The work of organizing and developing the Conference Missionary Society was no easy task. There were only a few scattered auxiliaries and these were composed of timid women who were afraid of the sound of their own voices. It was considered "unwomanly" to "speak in meeting" and this fact formed a comfortable refuge behind which "Mrs. and Miss Dolittle" immediately intrenched themselves. Even in places where the women were anxious to do something for the cause of missions there were no trained leaders to direct their efforts.

Mrs. Cobb realized all this, but she was not the woman to be daunted by difficulties. Numberless letters were sent out to arouse the interest of the women in the new enterprise. The weak were encouraged, and the indifferent were challenged. A

vigorous correspondence was kept up with Dr. Allen in order to get the latest news from the mission field, and this was broadcasted over the conference in Mrs. Cobb's letters.

No, she did not have a mimeograph, nor a typewriter, nor a private secretary. She wrote the letters one by one with her own hand, and so busy was she with her college duties that much of this missionary correspondence had to be attended to after midnight.

As a result of this work and that of her fellow officers, new auxiliaries began to spring up, and the old ones began to take on new life.

The first annual meeting was held in Macon in November, 1880. It was a small and unpretentious meeting—so small in fact that it was held in the parlor of Mrs. Charles Canning's home; but it was far-reaching in its influence, and to-day as thousands of missionary women look back to that humble beginning they realize that Mrs. Canning's parlor is to them what the widow Wallis's parlor at Kettering was to the Christian people of England in Carey's time. It is a place of hallowed history.

A letter containing an account of this meeting was written by Mrs. Cobb to Mrs. G. S. Johnstone of Talbotton, Georgia, who at her instance had organized several missionary societies. This letter, which has been preserved, gives a quaint picture of the meeting:

Macon, Georgia, Nov. 2, 1880.

DEAR MRS. JOHNSTONE:

I received your letter today and reply tonight in order that you may receive the enclosed letter from Dr. Allen in time for your meeting on Friday.

Our annual meeting was a decided success so every one who attended it says; and all the ladies went to their respective homes determined to labor more zealously than ever in the grand cause that is claiming our attention.

The meeting Friday night was held in the parlors of the parsonage. Dr. Rivers opened it with prayer and then gave us an encouraging little talk of a few minutes, after which the gentlemen all retired, leaving only ladies in the parlor.

Mrs. Mangham of this place read a welcome address to which Miss Cater, our Conference Corresponding Secretary, responded. Annie MacDonell then read a piece on "Infanticide in China," written by Mrs. J. W. Lambuth, wife of our Missionary who has been in China nearly twenty-five years. I will send you this piece if I have time to copy it. Miss Annie Snider read the letter from Dr. Allen, after which Mrs. Burden read a portion of Mrs. McGavock's report, taken from the minutes of the General Executive Association. Annie MacDonell also read the report from the North Georgia Conference Society, written by Mrs. Morgan Calloway. You will find this in the Wesleyan Advocate for October 23.

Saturday our meetings were held at Mrs. Canning's. Dr. Rivers again opened with prayer and then retired. You see our meetings were held in parlors with only ladies present; and there could be nothing unwomanly whatever connected with them.

Perfectly good order was maintained throughout and many cheering reports were read by the delegates. Our exercises were interspersed with singing and prayer, and we all felt drawn nearer to God. The Spirit is present with us, blessing us, and making us

feel that it was good to be there. Mrs. MacDonell's mother, Mrs. Walker, from Savannah, made a beautiful talk in the afternoon telling us that we must rely more fully upon prayer, and what we needed in our work was a more thorough consecration to God. We prayed for the spirit of consecration, and I firmly believe that the Lord will carry on this good work which has been commenced among the women of our church.

Let us go forward relying upon his guidance.

Affectionately,

ALICE COBB.

P.S. Dr. Allen's letter was written in January. He has fifty-one members in his church.

Another picture of that first annual meeting and the year that followed has been given by Mrs. G. W. Mathews, who as Annie MacDonell was one of those who took part on the program:

Mrs. Cobb was our pioneer in the work of the Conference Society. She presided at the first annual meeting, and Mrs. Robert MacDonell, then Tochie Williams, was at the organ. There were six vice-presidents—one over each district.

As the Corresponding Secretary was the representative of the Conference at the Board meeting, Mrs. Cobb's office was changed at this time from that of President to that of Corresponding Secretary.

This being the first organized work for women, there were few trained workers in public service; but there were women who loved God and His Kingdom, and these gave themselves unstintedly to the work.

Mrs. R. D. Walker, grandmother of the writer, succeeded Mrs. Cobb as president. You will smile when you learn that this devoted woman was seventy years old when she was elected and that she held this office for five years.

At one of the early meetings over which grandmother presided she would rise early and study a little slip of paper which my father had prepared to help her in her duties as chairman. As she pored over this piece of paper, she said in confidence, "I do not know a thing about parliamentary usage, but I would not have these women to know it for the world!"

But all that grandmother lacked in technical training was beautifully made up in her spiritual leadership.

Mrs. W. D. Williams, mother of Mrs. R. W. MacDonell, was another elderly woman who became a conference officer. She was for years our treasurer. During this time she lost her sight, but with the help of her son she continued to keep the books, and a more faithful and accurate treasurer we never had.

Imagine the consternation of the Entertainment Committee at Quitman, where one of our early conferences was held, when these instructions came with the names of the delegates: "Please provide a home near the church for Mrs. Walker, the president. She is old. Please see that Mrs. Williams is near the church. She is blind. The Secretary of the Thomasville District must be near the church. She is lame." No wonder that someone confidentially whispered, "The officers at this meeting consist of the lame and the halt and the blind!"

And this was the material out of which Mrs. Cobb was building the conference society. She realized the limitations of her co-workers, but no one was more conscious than she of the rich spiritual contribution which these dear saints of God were bringing to the work. In their presence she felt her own lack and was thereby being prepared for deeper service. Mrs. Mathews continues:

At the meeting in Quitman which has already been referred to, Mrs. Cobb was to speak for the first time without manuscript. She was anxious and troubled for fear she would break down, and I love to recall how, just before she left the room in which she and I were staying she asked me to join her in prayer that God would give her clearness of thought and calmness of utterance. We knelt and prayed, and God answered the prayer by giving her perfect freedom in the delivery of her message at the conference that evening.

What a picture this is of Alice Cobb, who always had her hand on the past and her eye on the future. The grandmothers were being used while the granddaughters were being trained. Even in that first meeting in Mrs. Canning's parlor there were present two of Mrs. Cobb's pupils, Annie MacDonell and Tochie Williams, who were later to take over the leadership of the Conference Society.

XV

THE WILLING WORKERS AND THE NEWSY

THE curtain was about to rise for the first act of the Cantata, Cinderella. A group of young people banded together under the name of "The Willing Workers" was sponsoring the play. Mrs. Cobb was behind the scenes directing. She had just finished dressing the boy who was to take the part of the prince. Now she was watching him while the orchestra finished the overture.

The boy softly stroked his velvet suit, fashioned out of a cape that had belonged to Mrs. Cobb, and then he went over to a mirror and surveyed himself. A strange look passed over his face. Gone were the patched clothes of his daily life; gone was the weariness with which he arose at 3 A.M. from his pallet on the floor; gone were all the hardships of his newsboy life. In that mirror he saw what he might be. He had discovered himself.

It was almost by accident that this boy had been chosen for the part of the prince. Mr. Campbell King of the Willing Workers was mailing clerk for Macon's leading newspaper. He became interested in the little "newsies," and as a result a Sunday

school class of newsboys was formed with the Hon. Walter B. Hill, who was afterwards chancellor of the University of Georgia, as the teacher.

When Mrs. Cobb was making up the cast for Cinderella, Mr. King told her that little fellow in the newsboy class, whose name was Bob Lee McKenney, had a good voice. She tried the boy out, and was so pleased that she gave him the part of the prince.

The music was finished, the curtain rolled up, and the prince came on the stage. How he sang! All the ambition and hope which the occasion had inspired went into his song. Behind the scenes Mrs. Cobb was thinking of the look she had seen on his face as he was gazing into the mirror, and wondering what his future would be. Would he live up to the vision that had come to him that night? She hoped so.

And Bob did not disappoint her. He never severed his connection with the Sunday school, and long afterwards when he was the chorister of the Sunday school and the president and editor of the Macon *News* he said: "Mrs. Cobb was one of the greatest influences for good in my life."

When the curtain went down at the close of the play, The Willing Workers gathered around the doorkeeper to inquire about the receipts. When they learned that more than $200.00 had been taken in, they were overjoyed. That would put them a long way toward their goal. They were an eager

band of young people that Mrs. Cobb had gathered about her.

Her first step had been to look up the recent graduates of Wesleyan who did not attend any Sunday school and organize these into a Sunday school class with herself as teacher. This was before the day of the Epworth League and the other young people's societies, and long before the day of the organized Sunday school class. But in this as in many other things Mrs. Cobb was ahead of her times. She realized the need of an organization in the church through which the young people could work. She wanted to see her girls keep on developing and she knew that the only way to make them do this was to put them to work. She realized, too, that the young people had social needs. Instead of decrying the social practices of the day, she prepared to furnish them with something better. So she broadened the scope of her Sunday school class, taking in young men as well as young women. In addition to the regular meetings on Sunday, she held business and social meetings on certain evenings every month.

She had the most cultured young people of the city in her Willing Workers band. Girls and men who had formerly thought of nothing but parties and balls now thought of what they could do for the church. Someone has said: "People who did not care for the church or for missions worked for

both, because of Mrs. Cobb's leadership, and because she cared for them."

The band's special objective, and Mrs. Cobb knew enough of psychology to know that they must have an objective, was to raise the money to build a new parsonage. In the language of to-day, this piece of work would be called "a week-day activity."

Such a building was badly needed. The preacher was living in a cramped little cottage that was altogether inadequate. Mrs. Cobb saw this need and immediately planned to meet it. She did not wait for the Board of Stewards to act, but began to raise the money. She was sure that if her Willing Workers raised a goodly sum, the Board would add to it and build a parsonage.

Mr. King, one of the leaders in the band, has told in a characteristic way of the condition under which Mrs. Cobb worked:

> Things were so flat in Macon in those days [he says] that the church authorities would have probably let the old parsonage stay right there and fall down had it not been for Mrs. Cobb. The total number of people living in Macon at that time was hardly equal to the number of automobiles here now. It was not very long after the civil war and people were getting along on what they had left—something like a chair gets along on three legs. Fences were down, bridges burned, negroes free, and not a white man in Georgia "broke to the plow."
>
> In the midst of this material and industrial distress, Mrs. Cobb organized The Willing Workers and began

raising money to build the parsonage. She had entertainments in parlors in the chapel of Wesleyan College, or in some rented hall. A small admission fee was charged, never more than twenty-five cents. The people came, and the money in our treasury grew.

Our members were the "crème de la crème" of Macon Society. Mrs. Cobb got the group together, not primarily to raise money, but to interest the young people in church work. Her object was to elevate the social life of the community. She succeeded so well that very few of the girls in our band attended fancy dress balls or the like.

There were only eleven livery stable carriages in those days and one "hack." These were all that could be mustered for the grandest wedding or the largest funeral. There were no street cars, and as the Willing Workers were raising money, not spending it, they walked!

In a comparatively short while we raised $1,500.00. One thousand of this was given to the building fund of the parsonage, and the rest went toward buying the furniture. When the stewards saw what we had done they raised $2,000.00, and the new parsonage was built.

As Mrs. Cobb surveyed the parsonage she felt well-repaid for her labors; but her happiest memory in connection with it all was of the night when the little newsboy prince had entered his Wonderland.

XVI

THE JUVENILE MISSIONARY SOCIETY

COLLEGE duties, the Conference Missionary Society, the Willing Workers, and now the Juvenile Missionary Society!

When Mrs. Cobb began to organize the women of her conference for missionary work, she soon found that the surest place to begin was with the children. If they could be taught the needs of the world and trained in habits of giving, a generation of missionary enthusiasts would arise. Accordingly, she urged the women to organize children's societies in all the churches; and she herself undertook to supervise the work of such a society in her own church.

One of the charter members of this society was little Margaret Kent, now Mrs. C. S. Strong, the superintendent of publicity in the Woman's Missionary Society of the North Georgia Conference. Mrs. Strong has written an account of the impression she received while a member of Mrs. Cobb's band of children which here follows:

It was a long way from our house to the home of Mrs. Cobb where the meetings of the Juvenile Society were held; but my little sister and I never had to be urged to go.

On Saturday mornings we swept the big yard, littered with leaves from the magnolias and other trees. No doubt we grew tired; but I recall only the joy of earning our missionary nickles. What a pride we felt when the roll was called, and we responded to our names by going forward and placing our earnings on the marble-top table!

The money *had* to be earned, and each child had to tell how it had been done! It was considered a disgrace for a mother to have to *give* the money to her child. I recall that one little girl had refrained from sucking her thumb, one had nursed the baby, one had kept the wood-box full, and another had waited on the table. Our little hearts would swell with satisfaction as our leader praised us for these small tasks. She made us feel that we were a real force in the world.

How well do I remember our first mite-boxes. Where Mrs. Cobb got them I do not know, but each was a beautiful piece of fruit made of plaster of paris. So perfect were they in shape and coloring that, across the room, they could scarcely be distinguished from the real articles. My sister had a tomato, and I had a beautiful pear. There were also apples and oranges. A small opening in the top received the money.

Upon each anniversary of our society a public meeting was held in the church. At these times our beautiful mite-boxes were broken and the contents counted. Our hearts would have been broken, too, had we not been immediately supplied with new pieces of fruit to take the place of what we had given up.

On one of these anniversaries, the governor of Georgia, Alfred Colquitt, himself a Methodist preacher, sat on the rostrum. When the last mite-box had been broken and the amount realized that night had been added to our dues for the year, it was found that we lacked only a few dollars of having an even hundred. Instantly Governor Colquitt took from his pocketbook the amount necessary to make

the hundred dollars, and placed it on the table with our nickles and dimes. I can recall at this moment the look of pride and joy that was on Mrs. Cobb's face that night.

On another anniversary we built the "Missionary Ship." Beginning at the very bottom, the different parts of the ship were brought to the rostrum and put into position by the children, so that a large sized vessel was literally built in the presence of the audience. Each plank had some typical name, as did the keel, rudder, anchor, masts, and sails. As each part was brought forward, the child who bore it recited an appropriate verse of poetry. When all was completed, the children went on board and sang missionary hymns. With sails unfurled, and the deck crowded with happy, singing children, the Missionary Ship presented a scene that could never be forgotten.

At one of our meetings Mrs. Cobb told us of Miss Laura Haygood who was soon to go to China as a missionary. Not long thereafter a number of us went to Wesleyan College one Sunday afternoon to hear Miss Laura give a farewell address. How wonderful seemed her going; and how far away seemed China! I could almost see the halo around her lovely head.

After that we watched Miss Laura's career with deep interest, and our childish prayers went up for her. Before long we heard that money was needed to put up McTyeire School in Shanghai for Miss Laura's use, and our little society worked hard to earn the money to buy a share. I think the amount was ten dollars; but it seemed a large sum to us then.

So deeply were we inspired by the training we received in this little society, and so firmly was the desire implanted in our little hearts to help Jesus in His work, that today the children and grandchildren of the members of our society are scattered over the world, doing the very things that Mrs. Cobb taught us to do.

XVII

"THE BEAUTY OF THE HOUSE IS ORDER"

BUT the home, the home! Did she neglect it entirely, leaving everything to Miss Mitt and Miss Millie?

Not a bit of it! She was the head of the home, and the home knew its head. True, many people helped her—most of all those two self-effacing ones who chose to live behind the scenes—but in this very thing was her power manifested; she knew how to let other people help her, and to draw from each the best service of which that one was capable. Strange as it may seem after the foregoing recital of her activities, it yet remains true that she never let her outside work interfere with the management of the home.

So it was she who was the housekeeper in that home on Bond Street, hired the servants, carried the keys, counted the laundry, and did much of the sewing.

The children were her first care. They must be kept clean, healthy, and exquisitely dressed; their minds must be trained, their manners looked after, and their characters developed. To all this she gave herself with unstinted devotion; but she did it so quietly that her methods were not much in evidence.

She often said that while other people had many rules for the training of their children, she had only two—one, that when they ate between meals, they must sit quietly on a newspaper spread on the floor; and the other, that they must be in bed each night at seven o'clock. She really had a third rule, but that was for herself. The hair of each child had to be brushed with fifteen strokes every day. Later on, as the hair grew longer, the number of strokes was advanced to one hundred. And Mrs. Cobb performed this task herself.

But whether with one rule or many the children thrived under their mother's care; and soon their winsome little figures were well known in the city, They were always dressed exactly alike and with their long braids of flaxen hair combed alike, they were often taken for twins.

Those were the days of plentiful servants, and while Mrs. Cobb was never willing to relinquish the care of her children, she believed in having good servants and plenty of them.

When she went to housekeeping, an old servant who had worked in her husband's family for eight years applied to her for the place of cook. Mrs. Cobb knew the danger of such an experiment but she ran the risk and hired her. There was never the slightest trouble. "Aunt Katie" became an institution in the family and remained there until Mrs. Cobb broke up housekeeping and moved into the college twenty-four years later.

The other servants likewise stayed for unusually long periods.

But how was she able to hold her servants and run the home so smoothly? Perhaps it was because her hand rested on the machinery of the household with a touch that was light and yet firm; so light, that everybody had freedom within their own sphere, and yet so firm that her own will when once expressed became the absolute law of the household. Another reason may have been that she herself knew her own limitations. The ability to boil an egg was still her only accomplishment in the culinary line; and, when she went into the kitchen, Aunt Katie would say: "What are you doing in here?" and laugh her merrily away. It was a part of her bigness that she was able to laugh with others at her own limitations.

Her work as head of the household was made much easier by Major Cobb's thoughtfulness and consideration. He was a "good provider." He bought flour and apples by the barrel, potatoes by the bushel, green coffee by the bag, oranges by the box, and everything else in proportion.

He was also considerate in the matter of bringing home guests. His relatives were legion and they lived all over the state. But if he met any of them down-town and invited them to a meal, he always sent a note ahead with an extra supply of things for the table. Mrs. Cobb would come home from school and find company there, but everything would

be in readiness and all she had to do was to preside at a well-appointed table.

Mrs. Cobb's qualities of orderliness and system were of great assistance to her in directing the affairs of the home. Spring cleaning was almost as much of an event on her calendar as was commencement. Her orderliness extended to the care with which she looked after the clothes of the family. When she put away the garments that came in from the laundry, she always placed the freshly laundered things at the bottom of the drawer. Thus the things washed previously were advanced to a top layer, where they would be worn before the things at the bottom. It was a kind of "rotation of crops" by which she provided for the same amount of wear and tear on all the garments.

Perhaps Mrs. Cobb's domesticity was best shown in her sewing. For a few years there was only one sewing machine in the house. It was of a peculiar make, and she was the only one in the family who knew how to use it. During this period Miss Mitt and Miss Millie would cut and baste the things that were to be made, and lay them aside to be stitched by Mrs. Cobb when she came home from school. And stitched they were, even if Hamlet had to wait until midnight to be studied. It was fortunate, perhaps, for Hamlet that Miss Mitt provided herself later on with a machine that she could use; and by this means Mrs. Cobb was relieved of a heavy mechanical work.

But, even when she gave up the stitching, Mrs. Cobb did not relax her interest in her children's clothes. She had put beautiful finger work on the layettes before the babies were born; and she saw to it that her children had beautiful clothes at every stage of their growth. She always had a basket of hand work near her, and she was never idle. If a caller came in, or if she was talking to the family —and she took time to do that—she would take up the work and make her fingers fly. Before long Mary and Genie would come out in new dresses trimmed in yards of briar-stitching, drawn-work, or hand-made lace; and everybody would wonder how Mrs. Cobb's children had such pretty clothes.

One day in study hall Mrs. Cobb called Katie Martin up to her desk. Katie's heart was in her mouth. What was Mrs. Cobb going to get after her about now? When she reached the desk, Mrs. Cobb said, "Katie, you have such pretty aprons. I want you to let me have one for a pattern so that I can make some like it for my children."

Mrs. Cobb's thoughtfulness was extended not only to her family but to her neighbors as well. Miss Mattie Nutting, who had been Mrs. Cobb's pupil, said:

My sister, Mrs. J. O. Wynn, and I lived near Mrs. Cobb for a number of years, and during this time we found out what a good neighbor she was. There were no trained nurses in those days, and whenever the children were taken sick, Mrs. Cobb came over

to help take care of them. Once when my sister's little boy was ill, she sat up all night. We expected such help from ordinary neighbors, but not from one who was a college professor and a pioneer in all big things.

After this close association we came to think of her not so much as the outstanding college teacher, but as the woman who had proven herself the best neighbor in the world.

XVIII

MRS. COBB ASSISTS IN FOUNDING MONTEAGLE ASSEMBLY

HER spare time—what should she do with it? One would hardly think this was a problem that would cause Mrs. Cobb any concern, and yet it did.

Back in her girlhood she had written at the suggestion of her grandfather to the president of Wesleyan asking about a summer school which he intended to organize. And from that time forward she had looked upon vacations as a time for further study and self-improvement.

But the great difficulty had been to find a place where she could do such work, for no summer school existed prior to the establishment of the Chautauqua Sunday School Assembly at Chautauqua, New York, in 1874. Mrs. Cobb hailed the Chautauqua movement with delight, and in spite of the fact that her children were small and that the journey to New York state was long, she went to Chautauqua for several summers.

The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, which was the first correspondence school in America, was founded in 1878. Mary and Genie were too small for Mrs. Cobb to take up this course when

it was first offered, but the year 1882 saw her beginning on this work, and the summer of 1886 saw her marching with the other graduates through the "Golden Gate" at Chautauqua.

But much as Mrs. Cobb valued the Chautauqua Assembly she realized that it was too far away to be of the best service to her and the other teachers in the South; and she longed for a similar assembly within easy reach, a place to which she could go for the whole summer and take here entire family with her.

In 1882 the opportunity came for her to realize this wish. A group of Christian business men from different parts of the South met together and began to plan for an undenominational assembly to be located at some health-giving mountain resort. Mrs. Cobb heard of this meeting and eagerly joined the movement. The place selected was Monteagle, Tennessee, a beautiful spot in the Cumberland mountains.

A large tract of land was bought and the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly was formally opened in the summer of 1882.

In speaking of this, the first "Daughter Chautauqua" to be found in the South, someone had said:

> First of all Monteagle was a summer home under religious influences, with card-playing, dancing, and all such rigidly forbidden. The beautiful mountain grove was soon dotted with cottages and tents centered around an auditorium, school buildings, restau-

rants and inns. At the very outset summer schools were organized offering courses in most of the branches taught in the southern high schools and colleges. This was the first real summer school in all the South. There were also extensive courses in Bible, church and missionary work, taking up the fundamental questions and problems of church activities both in the home and foreign fields. In addition there were daily lectures and entertainments of an inspiring character.

It was no accident that Mrs. Cobb was present at Monteagle when the Assembly opened and that she continued to go there every summer for the rest of her life. The place was a part of herself. It was the material expression of one of her ideals.

Her summer home, which she called "Wayside Cottage," was one of the first houses to be built on the Assembly grounds and, by the atmosphere that Mrs. Cobb created there, it always remained one of the places that most truly expressed the ideals on which the Assembly was founded.

Mr. A. P. Bourland, who was for a long time General Manager of the Assembly, has written the following estimate of Mrs. Cobb's value to Monteagle Assembly. In it he has also revealed his estimate of her character.

Thousands flocked to the mountain — teachers, preachers, planters, bankers, merchants—all callings mingling in a community devoting the summers to culture and to study for professional and personal improvement.

As I look back over those years there were a few

outstanding figures—and among these the one outstanding figure is Alice Culler Cobb. My first contact with her was in a class in English literature. For some time she had been Professor of English at Wesleyan College. I ought to have been embarrassed when she came into my class. She knew more about the subject than I did. She had had much more experience. She was remarkably gifted intellectually—but I was not embarrassed. I was inspired. This inspiration came from a feeling of sympathy. She understood the struggling young man intuitively. From that first day back in the early eighties until this moment she has been an inspiration in every day of my life.

There was no more eager student in all those great groups than Mrs. Cobb. She had a clear insight into her subject. She seemed to master it without effort. She was, therefore, at home, and easily at home, with the greatest scholars that ever came to Monteagle. All sought her. The porch of her cottage was their meeting place. To them all she was the essence of wisdom.

Another striking characteristic of her was her unceasing desire for progress. She came to Monteagle a great teacher, but in her own opinion feeling that she had scarcely made a beginning. So summer after summer she carried regular courses of study with more zeal than the average teacher just beginning.

From the outset Mrs. Cobb took an active part in all the affairs of the Assembly. Naturally those early years were years of dire struggle to make ends meet. There were many vexing questions to be settled. She and her beloved companion, Mrs. James Jackson, were unceasing in their effort to make the Assembly fulfill its mission.

As the summers went by the trustees committed to me more and more of the management of the assembly. I never took an important step without consulting Mrs. Cobb if it were at all possible. I went

to her at all times about all sorts of questions. I I felt that intuitively and instinctively she knew the right thing to do, and she did. Her word was final. When that was spoken I had no more doubt. She was quick to resent injustice and wrong—just as quick to stand for the right and for the just. So in her personality there was blended that power of sure insight and quick decision which I never knew to fail. To go contrary to even a tentative opinion of hers was, therefore, impossible.

While Mrs. Cobb was devoted to the established in our life and institutions, she was, furthermore, always progressive. I never knew her to cast suspicion on a new idea simply because it was new. Her custom was always to think it over, to look into it. "If it is true, then it is ours." She was, therefore, a blend of the conservative and liberal which makes for the sure progress of the race. In those early days I had radical ideas, but I did not hesitate to talk them over with her. I know that she would see into the heart of the thing and she would tell me what she saw. I always felt that, when she was speaking, truth was speaking; and it was.

XIX

MRS. COBB'S FRIENDSHIPS

TO THE Cobb home came a notable array of guests—preachers, lecturers, performers, educators, and missionaries; and all found there a congenial atmosphere. Frances Willard was a guest in the home when she made her first visit to Macon, and Miss Belle Bennett was entertained there when she was collecting the money to build the Scarritt Bible and Training School.

Once late in life when Mrs. Cobb was in the midst of crushing sorrow, she wrote to a relative: "Sometimes I think I have no sense; but then I remember who were my friends—Dr. Allen, Bishop Haygood, Dr. Potter, Dr. Bass, Dr. Branch, and Mr. Bourland." Evidently the mere writing of the list was comfort to her and it was in truth a great list:

Dr. Young J. Allen, the statesmanlike missionary who had become her faithful correspondent on the China fields; Dr. Potter, President of the Board of Trustees of Wesleyan College and a secretary of the Board of Missions, who during his residence in Macon took dinner in her home every Sunday; Dr. J. O. Branch, the gentle pastor who preached the irritating sermon on missions just before her conversion to the cause; Dr. Bass, the able educator

and preacher, who was now president of Wesleyan; Mr. A. P. Bourland, the gifted teacher who was her Monteagle friend; and Dr. Atticus G. Haygood, President of Emory College, who was later a Bishop of the M. E. Church, South—these were the outstanding personalities who helped to shape the life of Mrs. Cobb in her maturer years.

After she undertook active work in the missionary society, she seems to have had a period of doubt about her own religious experience. Was it deep enough? Did she know that she was saved? She was always reticent in speaking of the deeper things of the Christian life; she could write more easily than she could speak; so she wrote to Bishop Haygood and told him of her doubts. In his reply he gently reminded her of the goodness and love of God; how He receives all who come to Him, for they are "accepted in the Beloved." What God wanted of her, so her friend told her, was for her to lay down her doubts and trust. Mrs. Cobb seems to have acted on this advice, for the doubts were heard of no more.

In her friendship with Bishop Haygood Mrs. Cobb counted him the giver and herself the recipient. But some extracts from his letters will show that he did not look at the matter that way; also that he foresaw, even at that early day, what was to come to pass twenty years later; namely, Mrs. Cobb's elevation to high office among the missionary workers of her church.

EXTRACTS FROM BISHOP HAYGOOD'S LETTERS

January 1, 1884.

Let me say now your friendship is one of God's gifts to me. It has made me a better man—a stronger. You seem to me to be seeking the real light of the Christ. God bless you with a year of rich harvest for mind and heart—the real emoluments of life, more and more of Christlikeness in character and works.

April 10, 1884.

Please write me whenever you can. Yours are among the very few letters that I read twice—sometimes oftener. You help me more than you will ever know.

February 7, 1884.

You dare not let go the South Georgia Woman's Missionary Society. The fact that the committee does not meet until November makes no material difference. Having you as Secretary of South Georgia is material. Don't hesitate. I wish you could attend the meeting of the Woman's Board. If you live long enough, you are to play a very important part in the work of that Board.

February 7, 1884.

I think the meeting of the Board of Missions was a good one. Its plans mean progress and the discussions indicate some faith both in God and the people.

The Board provided for Anglo-Chinese University (Dr. Allen's school) as best it could without more money.

I thought it not best to put in my oar as to the Woman's Board and concentration in Rio. I have a growing consciousness that the women are entirely capable of "affairs." More and more I see great possibilities in the woman's movement, not for the heathen only but for the women at home. Its reflex power is enormous, and it is saving. It enlarges both heart and mind. It gives women a deeper consciousness of the

human race. And the event will show that their power of productive work in the church at home will be vastly increased by this work abroad. No words can express it. And—don't be startled—it will certainly enlarge women's sphere of usefulness and influence in every civilized country. The men will take counsel of the women in their own schemes. I have not written in the preceding sentence all that I mean. It would take pamphlets.

Mrs. Cobb's close and helpful friendships were by no means limited to men. She numbered her women friends by the score or even by the hundred. She was intensely progressive; yet she had reverence for the past. So among her women friends were representatives of the older generation, some of whom had been her mother's friends. She was never too busy to spend a part of her vacation in making pilgrimages to the homes of these elderly friends; and she always came away refreshed, having a new zest for her work.

One of her warmest friends was Mrs. Williams, Tochie's mother. In writing of this friendship the daughter said: "When my father and brother died, my mother was ill and far spent. At that time Mrs. Cobb was the only friend whom the Doctor permitted to see her. These two would sit in silence holding each other's hand. They did not need words to understand."

Mrs. Cobb also had friends among the women of her own age. One friendship of this character that was destined to comfort her much in her later years was that with Mrs. J. O. A. Clark of Macon. Mrs.

Clark, herself a woman of striking figure and brilliant mind, saw Mrs. Cobb first at the commencement of Emory College in 1870; and so strong was the impression made upon her by Mrs. Cobb's personality that from that moment to the hour of Mrs. Cobb's death, she remained her devoted friend. Others might criticize and question, but no matter what strain was put upon the friendship, Mrs. Clark always trusted and believed. This loyalty led Mrs. Cobb to confide more and more in this friend as the years went by.

Among the many women in Major Cobb's family connection there was one who became a real sister to Mrs. Cobb. This was Mrs. Jackson, the wife of Chief Justice James Jackson of Atlanta. Soon after Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. Jackson became acquainted, they found that they were congenial spirits; and for a period of nearly fifty years, as occasion permitted, they studied, planned, and wrote together. It became Mrs. Jackson's custom to spend her summers in Mrs. Cobb's cottage, at Monteagle, and there the two worked out many of the plans that gave to the Assembly an up-to-date Woman's Association, and a successful Woman's Missionary Association, with a home for the use of returned missionaries.

The value which Mrs. Cobb placed on the friendship of young people has been described in a number of places. Her own youth seemed perennial, and one reason of this was because she was always

renewing it in association with young people. One young man said:

> As great as she was, I always found her adaptable to one of my age and capacity. Scores of years divided us, yet she always made herself my friend, and never seemed to feel the disparity in our ages. When I went to college it was she who sought me out during vacations and held me to the church by giving me something to do.

Mrs. Cobb tried to keep up with as many of her students as possible and to show an interest in their affairs. Annie MacDonell said: "When I left College I wrote Mrs. Cobb about my engagement. She replied immediately with a letter of congratulation, and when the wedding took place she sent me a present."

It would be interesting to know how many among Mrs. Cobb's thousands of students could say the same thing, and to know also how many have daughters by the name of Alice.

The beautiful friendship with Tochie Williams continued and deepened. In January, 1881, Tochie married Rev. Robert W. MacDonell, who was under appointment to Mexico; and thus she became Mrs. Cobb's first missionary daughter. During the trying time of her departure for the foreign field it meant much to the young recruit to have Mrs. Cobb stand by her as a friend.

Some years later Mrs. Cobb again helped this friend to meet a crisis in her life. In writing of it Mrs. MacDonell said:

After four years of life in Mexico an experience came to us that should not have come to young, devoted missionaries; but as long as man is human these times of testing will come. It was necessary for me to come home for medical care, and while I was away my husband was transferred to the Border Conference and placed in El Paso, Texas. One day while I was visiting a so-called friend in Macon, she sneeringly said, "I see you are coming home. I didn't think you could stick." I hurried in hot indignation away, but when I passed the college I decided to stop and send in a "hurry call" for Mrs. Cobb. Out under the entrance to the Chapel I poured out my heart to her, and it was there that I found what a wonderful fountain of sympathy, love, and confidence she was. She put my head in her lap, and wrapped her arms about me; and as crooning mother, she quieted my storm of grief, pouring balm on my wounded feelings. Through her human love she helped me to bury that deadly enemy of the spiritual life—resentment; and thus she saved me to a larger self.

In closing this chapter on "Mrs. Cobb's Friendships," it must be plainly said, the names mentioned therein do not, in any sense, comprise a *list* of Alice Cobb's friends. Those who have been spoken of were selected, not because they were Mrs. Cobb's dearest friends, and certainly not because they were her only friends, but rather because they were thought to be typical of others, just as close, who could not be mentioned for lack of space. If such a recital as this could have been brought to the attention of Mrs. Cobb, she, herself, would have been the first to object to it, had it been regarded as a list.

XX

WESLEYAN UNDER DR. BASS

THE old South was conservative on the subject of elevating a woman to a position that had always been held by a man. So it was not until 1885 that Mrs. Cobb was formally elected to the chair of English Literature at Wesleyan. True, she had been sitting in the "chair" for nearly twenty years; but it took the authorities that long to decide that she deserved the same title as a man doing the same work.

Other changes, too, were taking place at Wesleyan. Most of these were due to the efforts of Dr. Bass, whom Mrs. Cobb had mentioned in her list of honored friends. She loved to think of what he had done for Wesleyan.

He had come to the college as professor of natural science shortly after her graduation; and when she had returned as a young widow, and a member of the faculty, it was the Bass family who took her in and ministered to her. Minnie, the daughter, became her roommate and admirer; Mrs. Bass became her confidant and social adviser; while Dr. Bass, who seemed so stern, and was so tender, became her counsellor and friend.

The tie between Alice and the Bass family had

ORIGINAL MAIN BUILDING AT WESLEYAN

not been weakened when she married Major Cobb and moved to a home of her own. Four years after her marriage, Dr. Bass was elected president of the college. Mrs. Cobb was delighted; for she realized the struggle that Wesleyan was having; and she believed that Dr. Bass would lead on to success if anyone could.

In writing of the difficulties through which Wesleyan was passing at this time someone said: "Little aid was received in the shape of endowments; and the poverty of the country, both during and just after the war, made even its efforts for existence difficult. Certainly little could be spared to improve the buildings, beautify the grounds, or add to its attractions."

A novel financial expedient had been adopted to meet the situation—one which seems to have been common to the struggling women's colleges of that day. The plan was this: When the trustees elected a president it was understood that he would become the "lessee" of the college. Under this plan he received no salary, but paid the good round sum of $2000.00 a year as a rental for the building. It was his business to keep the institution running out of what he collected from the students. If he cleared anything after meeting all the expenses and paying the lease, it was his own; but if he lost, that was also his own affair.

The system was not one that was calculated to develop a college. *It was merely an expedient to*

keep things going. A small or niggardly man might use it to ruin the institution; but in the past, in spite of the financial risk involved, a big-hearted man had always been found for the office of president; and those who knew Dr. Bass knew that one had been found now. They felt that with his executive ability and business tact, he could even improve the financial condition of the college.

Out of the slender income received from the fees of the students, he employed an able faculty of twenty-two people, a large number for a southern college at that time; he furnished heat and light, and a grade of food that was better than could have been expected for the price that was charged; he hired all necessary servants; met every bill for the running expenses of the institution; and had enough left over every year to pay the lease.

This was the more remarkable because of the help that Dr. Bass gave to scores of students every year by reducing their fees. It was his custom to make no charge for tuition for the daughters of preachers, and also to give them a reduction on the already low rate charged for board. These same liberal terms were also made to girls who came from families of limited means—especially the daughters of his old friends, and daughters of former Wesleyan students. Sometimes there were as many as forty preachers' daughters in the college at one time, and an equal number of other beneficiaries, making a total of eighty or nearly one-fourth of

the student body. This number was large enough to have bankrupted him. Yet he did not go into bankruptcy; and every year, by the steady paying of the lease, he removed the college further away from the possibility of such a calamity.

How he did it, nobody knew; except that he did the work of half a dozen men. He was president, teacher, lessee, registrar, steward, and bookkeeper all at once and all without clerical help! The only telephone in the college was in his office, and he answered it himself. No man to-day would undertake such a program. He did it and did it well. And in addition he found time to look after the spiritual welfare of his students, and to preach almost every Sunday at a needy little country church.

Under his administration, the attendance increased and the course of study improved. But Dr. Bass was not satisfied. The main building was inadequate in size, and was sadly out of repair. A large sum was needed to remodel and enlarge it. But where was such a sum to come from? Nobody in the war-wounded South had any money. Dr. Bass took his problem to the trustees, and Bishop Haygood, who was a member of that body, began to make appeals through pulpit and press. He asked for gifts both for Wesleyan and Emory College.

In the year 1881 these appeals reached the attention of Mr. George I. Seney, a philanthropist of Brooklyn, N. Y., who responded by giving the sum

of $125,000 to Wesleyan and a similar amount to Emory. The rejoicing in Macon knew no bounds. The amount of the gift seemed very large; but to the people of the South the manner of its bestowal was even more remarkable.

Said the giver: "I make this gift for the education of the daughters of the South in memory of my mother. We are one people. Your people are my people." Such a statement coming at that time from a citizen of the North, and accompanied by such tangible evidence of goodwill, did more than anything else could have done to heal the distrust and suspicion that existed between the two sections.

One hundred thousand dollars of this gift was used for remodeling and enlarging the main building; and the rest was used to endow the Lovick Pierce Professorship. The old building with its stately columns was partly torn away, and the new Wesleyan with its turrets and towers took its place. Through the generosity of one man and a citizen of the North, the Mother of Female Colleges stood forth at last tall and splendid, and well-equipped.

So handsome did the new building appear to the people of that day that it was spoken of in the newspapers as "the most magnificent college building in the South."

With the completion of this building Wesleyan entered upon a new era of prosperity. Everything was moving forward. As someone said, "Macon had a college atmosphere, and commencement was

the social event of the year." In those days, the commencements were held in June when the weather was hot, and they lasted almost a week; but the people flocked to the college chapel twice a day, and sometimes even standing room was at a premium. The newspapers were filled with glowing descriptions of the exercises, and many complimentary things were said of Mrs. Cobb, who trained the students for the elaborate plays and other entertainments that formed a part of the exercises.

Mrs. Cobb enjoyed this work, for it was an outlet for her dramatic instinct; the college authorities were pleased with it; and the public applauded it. Mrs. Cobb was far from satisfied. She recognized that her efforts in this line were those of an amateur, whereas she felt that Wesleyan ought to have a department of expression with a thoroughly trained specialist at its head.

Mrs. Cobb took this problem to Dr. Bass who was always sympathetic with her plans for the improvement of Wesleyan; and as a result Wesleyan soon had on its faculty a graduate of the Emerson School of Oratory.

Another weakness which Mrs. Cobb realized in the curriculum was that there was no training offered in parliamentary practice. She was pained by the lack of businesslike methods and orderly procedure that often characterized the work of the missionary societies and she determined to develop a generation of women who would be able to "rise

to a point of order." This need also was taken to Dr. Bass, who consented to have the class, provided Mrs. Cobb would take charge of it. The result was a lively class in parliamentary practice in which many of the present club women and missionary leaders of Georgia and the South received their first training.

Other departments at Wesleyan were also moving forward at this time; and, taken altogether, the decade from 1880 to 1890 was one of remarkable advance. The most brilliant event of this period was the semi-centennial which was celebrated at the commencement of 1888. Mrs. Cobb assisted in preparing the program for this occasion, and some give to her the credit of being the instigator of the whole celebration.

XXI

A MOTHER-TEACHER

FOR the second time in the history of Wesleyan the name of Mary Cobb was entered on the matriculation books. This took place forty-seven years after the name of the first Mary Cobb had been entered there. Wesleyan was now able to claim daughters who represented three generations of one family.

Mingled joy and pain filled Mrs. Cobb's heart as she saw her daughter enter her classes as a pupil. Mary was so like her mother that, looking at her, Mrs. Cobb saw herself back in college again. The ambitions that had burned for herself now burned for her daughter. She wanted Mary to excel. She would have been disappointed to see her take a second place. But she had reason to hope that she would not be disappointed. Mary's intellect, guided at home as well as at school by the experienced mind of her mother, kept her well in the lead among her classmates.

But laurels won are not always laurels worn. A great pain filled the mother's heart as she realized that Mary's successes had brought her into competition with some students who were saying that a mother-teacher could never be fair. She realized

that most of the pupils knew nothing of the price that her daughter paid for success. They could not know how, night by night as the Cobb family sat in happy intercourse around the evening lamp, it was Mary's custom to retire to a quiet room where she prepared the lessons that made her the envy of her classmates.

In her sophomore year Mary entered the contest for the medal in expression. As this was before the teacher in expression was secured, Mary and the other contestants were trained by Mrs. Cobb. On the night of the contest Mary gave a brilliant reading of Ben Hur's "Chariot Race."

But when the newspapers came out the next day in open prediction that she would be the winner of the contest, Mrs. Cobb sent a note to the judges, and withdrew her daughter's name.

When the senior year was reached, the feeling of rivalry became more acute; and the burning question was "Who will carry off the college honors?" At this time it was still the custom at Wesleyan to award first and second honors; and in Mary's class there were three contestants just as there had been in her mother's case years before. But this time all three were Macon girls, and this fact made the feeling more intense.

One day, towards the close of the school year, the faculty was behind closed doors averaging the grades of the students. Mrs. Cobb, who was sitting with that body, did not know what the result would

be. At last there came a hush as Dr. Bass announced, "Mary Cobb has first honor."

Up spoke the mother. "I will not allow her to accept it," she said.

"But you cannot help yourself," replied the president. "She has won it."

"That does not make any difference," said the mother. "I withdraw her name."

Argument and persuasion were of no avail until finally the mother thought of a plan. "Let me withdraw all of the marks I ever gave to any of the contestants," she said, "and then you can make the average again. Perhaps the result will be different."

Again Dr. Bass demurred: "Mary may not get it, and that would not be fair. She deserves the grades which she has won by hard labor in your classes."

"I do not care," said the mother, "Mary cannot have it otherwise."

So the averages were again made out with all of the grades given by the teacher-mother omitted. With almost breathless interest the faculty waited. At last the announcement came: "Mary Cobb is still ahead. She gets first honor."

Misgivings still filled the mother's mind, but the honors were announced; and then there followed what the mother had feared—stinging criticisms, accusations of partiality, and much talk about a "teacher's daughter." Explanations did no good,

and both mother and daughter could only suffer in silence.

It was about this time that Mrs. Cobb arranged Genie's course so that she would graduate in five years instead of four. This kept her from belonging to any particular class, and thus put her out of competition with her fellow-students.

This has been written to show some of the difficulties which Mrs. Cobb had to meet, and how she met them. She was far more sensitive to criticism than most people realized; and yet no person could accomplish as much as she did, and at the same time escape criticism.

In her various public activities she frequently antagonized people because of the positiveness of her convictions and the ardor with which she advocated them. Sometimes, of course, she was in the wrong, and when she saw her fault she was quick to acknowledge it; but more often the trouble grew out of the fact that she was ahead of her times and other people did not see as she did.

But, whatever the cause, these times of misunderstanding and disagreement discouraged her and she would come home thoroughly despondent. It was then that Major Cobb, who understood her so perfectly, would comfort and encourage her in his quiet way until the black mood passed, and she was ready to begin again with her usual courage and enthusiasm. He did for her what she was constantly doing for others—he inspired her with confidence in her

own ability to achieve. He held her safe in Wonderland.

Thus it will be seen what the home on Bond Street meant to Mrs. Cobb. No matter how troubled were the waters of public life she could always go there and find a peaceful haven.

And what a home it was! Major Cobb looking after the interest and happiness of every member of the family; her sister, Miss Culler, and her stepdaughter, Miss Millie, busy about their domestic duties; her stepson, Mr. James Jackson Cobb, working his way up in the business world, and at the same time finding his highest interest in being the superintendent of a mission Sunday school that was fast growing into a church; and her own daughters, Mary and Genie, blossoming into beautiful womanhood. Here on the altars of wifehood and motherhood Mrs. Cobb poured out her best gifts; and here she received her richest rewards.

XXII

MRS. COBB AND HER TOMBOYISH NIECE

IT WAS during this period that the other Mary Culler came to live in the home—Mary Culler White. She was the daughter of Mrs. Cobb's sister Emma, and at Mrs. Cobb's invitation she now came to make her home with the family in Macon while she attended Wesleyan.

Now this Mary Culler was not in hot pursuit of an education, nor was she an aspirant after fame. She was just a plain climber of literal trees—china-berries, oaks, osage-oranges, and pines—a tomboy, if you please. But Mrs. Cobb was a big enough woman to let even a tomboy follow her bent. So Mary Culler climbed at will over the neighbor's roofs, dragging the less venturesome Genie after her; and she explored freely the topmost branches of many trees on the college campus. Auntie Mitt, looking on, was thrown into nervous chills by the fear that the climber would break her neck, and make Genie break hers, too; but Mrs. Cobb watched the proceedings calmly and only laughed. She even provided Genie and Mary Culler with employment that was in accordance with their tomboyish tastes This employment was to kill the rats that overran the classrooms at Wesleyan.

These rats were as old as this oldest of female colleges, and they had become intrepid through many years of higher education. They stalked into classrooms during the recitation period, and frightened timid students nearly to death.

Among the teachers at the college was a brainy woman possessed of rare literary gifts and a somewhat peculiar personality. The only voice she possessed was a shrill falsetto. Now this lady was very excitable and her pet aversion was rats. One day while she was teaching in class a large rat entered the room, and started toward the rostrum. Immediately the teacher sprang upon the chair, and gathering her skirts about her, cried wildly in her falsetto voice, "Young ladies, protect yourselves."

Mrs. Cobb was a warm friend of this teacher; and a frank admirer of her gifts; but she had a sense of humor and that rat story was too much for her. She laughed over it again and again. Some time later a rat entered her own classroom. She sat quietly at her desk, but called to the students in a perfect imitation of her friend's peculiar voice, saying, "Young ladies, protect me."

It was after this experience that Mrs. Cobb provided Genie and Mary Culler with the air gun that they had long desired, and allowed them to stay in the study hall after school in order to kill the rats. But, alas, for their hopes! They were under graduates; and, as such were no match for the rats, who were members of the local alumnae. They did not

succeed in killing a single one. However, they did not report fully the poor luck they were having, and Mrs. Cobb still believed in them as skillful hunters of over-bold rodents.

One morning Mary Culler was in a class that was reciting to her aunt. Just as the period began, Mrs. Cobb asked her to go home and get a book she had forgotten. When Mary Culler returned with the book some thirty minutes later, the whole class looked up expectantly as she entered the door. Mrs. Cobb explained, "Mary Culler, there is a rat on the mantelpiece at the end of the room, and we have been waiting for you to come so that you could get the air gun and kill it."

Mary Culler's heart sank. She saw the rat promenading on the mantelpiece, and she went to the closet and took out the air gun; but she knew she could not kill that rat with that gun.

Even if she succeeded in hitting it, which was not likely, the bullet would rebound like a buckshot from the side of an armored cruiser. What was she to do? Here was her aunt looking at her with a confident smile on her face, and here were her fellow students all watching her eagerly. The miserable Mary Culler proceeded, gun in hand, in the direction of the mantelpiece. She knew she was going to fail, but she would get as close as possible before she attempted to shoot. At last, when she was only a few yards away, the rat ran behind a strongly woven, rectangular lunch basket which

some student had placed on the mantelpiece. Quick as a flash, Mary Culler laid aside her futile weapon, and sprang toward the lunch basket, pinning the rat behind it, and holding the creature there until it expired. What arms and ammunition could not do, sound economics (the full dinner pail) readily accomplished. But it was not the teacher of economics who had inspired the act. It was the teacher of literature whose expectant eyes had been fixed upon her niece. It was just another case of the rabbit and the tree. Mary Culler was "obleeged" to kill that rat, and she killed it.

It was not long before Mrs. Cobb had Mary Culler climbing trees of another variety. She never induced her to climb the tall pine of scholarship which her own Mary was ascending, nor the spreading oak of poetic dreams where Genie climbed when alone; but she did get her up a few saplings in the forest of literature which it is certain that Mary Culler would never have attempted had she been left to herself. And the memory of these things went with the girl out into her after life where after the lapse of more than thirty years, she is still climbing trees of both the literal and figurative varieties.

In the present volume this erstwhile tomboy might be referred to by the title of "The Writer" or some other appellation of similar meaning. But the truth is that none of these designations would be appropriate; they are all too stiff. Moreover this

venturesome climber is conscious that in the writing of this book she is attempting the most daring climb, and she is downright scared lest she may fall. If she should happen to this misfortune, it would be better for her to do so under a plain every-day name than under a stiff title, an editorial "we" or even a singular "I." So "Mary Culler" she must remain to the end of the book.

XXIII

"WE FALL TO RISE"

MRS. COBB had the misfortune to suffer from a number of severe falls. She knew what it was to experience broken bones, bruises, dislocations and sprains. And the funny thing about it was that every time she fell Miss Mitt got mad.

Sometimes when Mrs. Cobb was away from home she would write back with a touch of humor, saying, "I have had my annual fall." But she always dreaded to come home after one of these experiences, because she knew what her sister was going to say, and she did not want to hear her say it.

One of the worst of her falls came while she was away on a trip the summer after Mary's graduation. Mary was very young when she was graduated, and her mother planned for her to go to New York and continue her studies in music and art. But first she wished her to travel. Accordingly she planned a trip to the eastern states and Canada, which was to be Mary's graduation present.

Mrs. Cobb herself was fond of travel. She enjoyed seeing new places and meeting new people and she knew that the culture derived therefrom was an invaluable asset in her work. She was will-

ing to spend money on travel, for she always said that it was better to "be poor and live rich" than to "be rich and live poor." She was a good illustration of her theory, for while she lived within her means, which was limited, she always "lived rich."

So in the summer following Mary's graduation she arranged this trip for her daughter and herself. Two others were invited to join the party—a fellow teacher who would be congenial for her, and a classmate of Mary's who would brighten the trip for the girl.

Mrs. Cobb wished this trip to be a pilgrimage to the homes of the outstanding men of letters in America and to the scenes where these men had laid their plots. The two young girls just out of college, and the two well-seasoned school teachers entered with zest upon the journey.

They visited New York and made a trip up the Hudson to Sunnyside, the home of J. G. Holland. Afterwards they went to Niagara, thence down the St. Lawrence through the beautiful scenery of the Thousand Islands and on to the peaceful cities of Canada. A carefully planned visit was made to the Evangeline country. What a joy this was to the teacher who knew and loved every line of the book!

But while Mrs. Cobb was at Grand Pré and enjoyment was at its height, the fall came! The result was an injury to the coccyx—the lowest of the vertebrae in the spine. A doctor was called who said that the hurt was serious and that she must

stay quietly in bed. The pain was so great that she was glad to follow his advice, but she insisted that the party should go on as though nothing had happened.

Mary was made to go out sightseeing as usual, and it was only when they were nearly ready to start for Boston that Mrs. Cobb telegraphed to Major Cobb about her accident. The message read: "Slightly hurt. Meet me in Boston." Her husband lost no time in getting to Boston and was there to meet her when she arrived weak and helpless. She had to be taken to the hotel and put to bed, but her spirit was undaunted, and from her sick room she directed the sightseeing of the party. After some days in Boston the doctor allowed her to get up.

Her first attempt to walk sent her back to the hotel. But the next day found her again making painful efforts to get about, and the next, and the next, until at last with the help of a cane and a carriage she was able to visit those literary shrines which she had longed to see—the haunts of Longfellow, Emerson, and Holmes. And on one never-to-be-forgotten Sunday she heard Phillips Brooks preach.

Just before time for school to open Major Cobb brought her back home. There she was met by her irate sister whose wrath had been getting hotter every day that she had tarried after her injury.

Miss Mitt looked her sister over, taking in such details as the cane with which she walked and the

air cushion on which she sat; but assuring herself, at the same time, that the injury was not likely to prove fatal; and then she stood up in the middle of the floor and, addressing no one in particular, delivered herself of the speech that Mrs. Cobb had known she would make.

It was this: "Old fools are the biggest fools. Why can't she be satisfied to stay at home instead of gallivanting all over the country; or if she will go away and get hurt, why doesn't she know enough to come home as soon as she falls?" The speech being finished Miss Mitt flirted out of the room.

To Millie she said, "When Alice gets well I'm going to tell her that I never want her to send another telegram saying 'slightly hurt.' She can at least say how she is hurt." And Millie smiled, knowing that this was just Aunt Mitt's way of showing her devotion. She was the only one who ever took the liberty of scolding Mrs. Cobb, and she did it out of a heart that was filled with an older sister's love and solicitude.

XXIV

MRS. COBB AS A CLUBWOMAN

MRS. COBB was an enthusiastic clubwoman. When she was a student at Wesleyan she joined the Adelphean Society which had been founded in 1851, and which later became the "mother chapter" of the Alpha Delta Pi sorority, the oldest sorority in America. When Mrs. Cobb was a teacher at Wesleyan she became an honorary member of the Philomathean Society, which was founded in 1852, and which was the "mother chapter" of the Phi Mu Society.

The atmosphere of Macon lent itself easily to the formation of literary clubs. For half a century Wesleyan had contributed its full share to the culture of the community, and in the year 1871 Mercer University which had just moved to Macon began to make a like contribution to the intellectual life of the city. Hence it was not strange that Macon contained a group of brilliant people who were deeply interested in all literary subjects.

About 1877 this group of which Mrs. Cobb was an enthusiastic member came together and founded the Atheneum, a literary club which had for its object the investigation of literary topics, and the promotion of culture through social intercourse. Some

have given Mrs. Cobb the credit of originating the idea of the Atheneum, but at this date it is impossible to ascertain positively who was the founder. However, it is well known that Mrs. Cobb was one of the charter members and she continued to be one of the club's most active members and workers.

The meetings were held in the evening and were the literary feasts of the city. The number of those who were "bidden" to these intellectual banquets was limited; for the club admitted only those who had been favorably voted upon by the membership committee, and that committee turned down all who were not ready to conform to the aims of the club. As some one has said, "You could not just walk in and be a member of the Atheneum."

The first president of the club was Dr. A. J. Battle, for seventeen years the able head of Mercer University. Among the later presidents were Hon. Walter B. Hill and Rev. W. B. Jennings.

For many years this club continued to bless and elevate Macon Society, and during all this time one of the most potent factors in holding the club to its high standards was the influence of Mrs. Cobb.

Another club in which Mrs. Cobb was deeply interested was the History Club. A lady who was a charter member of this club has furnished the following statement:

> Running things was recreation to Mrs. Cobb. In 1890 she accused the brightest young men and women of Macon society of being too much given to pleasure.

She threw out a challenge by inviting them to come to her home and form a History Club. They responded to her challenge, and the club was formed with Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. T. O. Chestney as directors. The meetings were held on Friday evenings in Mrs. Cobb's home and were conducted in the form of a symposium and were altogether delightful.

I studied continuously from one meeting until the next, delving into the subjects with the help of two splendid libraries to which I had access. Sometimes I even got out of bed to study. My family laughed at me but I kept right on.

The work done in that History Club has been an inspiration to me all my life. I have never stopped digging. I have often wished that my daughter might have had the privilege which I had of coming under Mrs. Cobb's influence.

A short while ago a young man who was a senior in a university came to me with an original paper which he wished me to criticize. The paper brought in quite a bit of historical data, but failed to give the appropriate dates. I advised the young man to fill in the dates, and then I furnished them to him from memory. He was amazed; but I knew that I was only giving out what I had learned in Mrs. Cobb's History Club.

In speaking of the History Club Mrs. Cobb's co-worker Mrs. Chestney said:

I do not know why Mrs. Cobb ever chose me as her associate in this work, but I do know that she was the greatest inspiration of my life. Her vivacity was contagious. True, the rest of us had enough vivacity along some lines, but when it came to "mental gymnastics" we had to be on the alert to keep up with Mrs. Cobb.

My husband said, "Gracious me! I wish my chil-

dren would study as hard as you do, pouring over those old books of English History."

A literary club which had a wider scope was organized by Mrs. Cobb in 1888 under the name of "English Literature Circle of Wesleyan College." This was a correspondence course with examinations covering three years of work which was suited to college graduates. It was arranged by Mrs. Cobb herself with a view to the needs of the Wesleyan alumnae, but was open to anyone who would undertake to do the work. Mrs. Cobb said:

> Many of the girls, when they quit school are anxious to continue to improve themselves, but having no one to guide them in the right path, they either stagnate or degenerate. It was this fact that first moved me to issue the circular announcing the course.

The circular mentioned was no cold prospectus as prepared by a committee, but a warm appeal right out of Mrs. Cobb's heart. It is closed with the words:

> With a heart full of love for you, dear girls, and a yearning desire for the promotion of true culture, I remain,
>
> Your friend,
>
> Mrs. J. B. Cobb.

It is not surprising that at the end of the first year, with no advertising to back the scheme, there were about sixty young women who were taking the course offered by the "English Literature Circle."

Mrs. Cobb was interested not only in literary clubs, but in all patriotic and civic clubs as well. She always claimed that the missionary society was the forerunner of the woman's club, and that many of the club leaders received their training, as she had done, while working in the missionary society.

In addition to the clubs which have been mentioned above, Mrs. Cobb was Regent for the Mary Hammond Washington Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution; President of the Current Topics Club; President of the Wesleyan Alumnae Association; President of the Macon Woman's Christian Temperance Union; a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy; and a member of the National Geographic Society.

It is not claimed that the foregoing list is complete, but there is truth in the statement made by one who knows, "Do not investigate. Just say that Mrs. Cobb was at the forefront of every movement in Macon that looked to the intellectual, moral, or social betterment of the community, and you will be right."

XXV

THE DEATH OF MAJOR COBB

A SHADOW lay across the threshold of the Cobb home. Major Cobb was ill. With hushed voices and anxious fear the family watched by his bedside. Mrs. Cobb did not leave him for a moment. Her classes had to be taught by someone else. Mary, who was studying art in New York, was telegraphed for. The illness lasted for several months and was followed by only a partial recovery.

When commencement week came the patient was well enough to be up and around the house; but when he got up Mrs. Cobb collapsed. The strain had been too much for her.

To many of the students at Wesleyan there was something incomplete about the commencement exercises of that year. Mrs. Cobb was not there. Dr. Bass referred to her absence in his baccalaureate address, and the seniors made a pilgrimage to her bedside to say goodbye. One of the most devoted of these students in writing about the visit said: "She was so ill we could see her for only a moment. I shall never forget the courtesy of Major Cobb as he talked with me in the hall, giving me time to dry my eyes."

The two patients were taken to Monteagle for the summer; and when autumn arrived they were both so much better that they were able to return to their duties—the one to the office, and the other to the college. But the family realized that the shadow had only lifted in Major Cobb's case. It had not left the door. Another stroke might come at any time.

They did not wish Major Cobb to be alone for a moment, yet Mr. J. J. Cobb was the only member of the family who could be with him at his office. In order to accomplish this the son gave up his position in a bank and went into the insurance business with his father.

As soon as Major Cobb took up his duties at his office he insisted on resuming his daily walks to the college with his wife. His steps were feeble now, and slow; but his pleasure in taking these walks far outweighed the fatigue and the pain. There was nothing to do but to let him have his way. Fortunately there was now an electric car to take him from the college to his place of business.

A year passed in this way, and the family grew more hopeful. Surely the shadow was leaving their door. The happy parents saw Genie graduate, and in the summer of that year both the girls went to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago; but Mrs. Cobb did not go. She again took her husband to Monteagle and watched over him there.

In the autumn the family returned to Macon and

resumed their daily program. Early every morning Mr. Jim Cobb left the house and walked to the office in time to be there when his father arrived. Major Cobb left a little later, walked to the college gate with his wife, and then took the street car for his place of business. This order of events was repeated immediately after the noon meal. The few moments spent on the street car was the only time in the day when Major Cobb was alone. And one day, without any warning, he died while on the street car. His last act had been to walk to school with his wife.

The next day Mulberry Street Church was filled to over-flowing with sorrowing friends as Dr. Bass gave out the text, "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

"We are come to-day," said the preacher, "to bury a good man." And everybody in that church, from Miss Mitt, the sister-in-law, who would have known had there been anything to criticize, to Aunt Katie, the black cook, who sat weeping with the family—everybody knew that Dr. Bass's words were true.

By his own request, made during his illness of the year before, Major Cobb was buried in Riverside cemetery close beside a Confederate redoubt or mound of earth behind which the southern soldiers had fought during the war.

Mrs. Cobb was overwhelmed. Her grief was in proportion to the greatness of her husband's love

for her, and that had known no bounds. As soon as possible she returned to her duties at the college, but every walk to that institution brought fresh pangs. She and Major Cobb had taken that walk together twice a day for twenty-three years, and now she must take it alone.

Mary and Genie had to put away their own grief to try to comfort her. Tenderly they recalled their father's many acts of devotion and humbly they sought to make themselves his substitutes. But in spite of all that they could do Mrs. Cobb often gave way utterly. She would sob for hours and the only time that she seemed to get any comfort was when someone would take little John B. Cobb, Jr., the first born son of Mr. and Mrs. James J. Cobb, and put him into her arms.

XXVI

MRS. COBB BECOMES LADY PRINCIPAL OF WESLEYAN

AFFAIRS at Wesleyan were moving toward a crisis. Dr. Bass was sick in body and burdened in heart. The year 1892 was a panic year and the whole country was suffering because of the stringency of the times. Wesleyan, none too prosperous in the best of years, was seriously embarrassed. Under the lease system the entire responsibility fell on Dr. Bass. Being the man that he was, he would not complain nor ask for assistance. But Wesleyan had a loyal faculty as well as a wonderful president. One day Dr. Bass found on his desk the following letter:

DEAR DR. BASS:

Realizing that the income of the college has probably been reduced, by causes beyond human control, and for which you are in no way responsible, and having the utmost confidence in your justice, integrity, and unselfish regard for the interest of all associated with you, we, the undersigned members of the Wesleyan faculty, desire to express our appreciation of the sacrifices you have so often made in the interest of the college, and to assure you of our willingness, in the present emergency, to bear our share of the burden and loss by consenting to accept such a pro rata reduction on our salaries as in your judgment may be just and necessary.

This letter was signed by fifteen of the faculty—the third name being that of Alice Culler Cobb. It is not known whether Dr. Bass accepted the proffered help or not. But the act cheered his heart, and once more, in the midst of tremendous difficulties, Wesleyan was enabled to carry on.

But the physical pain which Dr. Bass was suffering was not so easily relieved. The disease which had fastened upon him grew worse instead of better, and in the spring of 1894 he felt compelled to resign. Dr. Bass's retirement from the presidency of the college was especially painful to Mrs. Cobb. She knew how she would miss him, and then, too, she wondered whom the trustees would elect in his place.

The latter problem was the one that was agitating the mind of everyone—especially the trustees. Numbers of people began to prophesy that Mrs. Cobb would be elected. The only difficulty seemed to be that she was a woman. Had Wesleyan been situated elsewhere than in the South she might have been made president; but in this as in everything else the South was conservative.

Dr. Bass' resignation was handed in at a called meeting of the Board of Trustees held in the spring. The first action thereafter taken by that body was to pass a "safety first" resolution designed to govern the election which was to take place in June. The resolution read: "Resolved that no one shall be elected president who is not a minister of the

Methodist Episcopal Church, South." This resolution had the same effect as the glass legs of the insulator. It cut off the current.

When the regular meeting of the Board was held in June, a Methodist minister was duly elected president, while Mrs. Cobb was put into the newly created office of Lady Principal. This office corresponded somewhat to that of the present-day dean. In order to fill it Mrs. Cobb had to give up her home and move into the college. The sacrifice was great; for her grief-stricken soul cried out for the privacy that her home afforded. Then, too, her daughters were now young ladies and she wanted them to have the freedom of a home.

But the call had come; and Mrs. Cobb was unwilling to consider her own feelings when the interest of Wesleyan was at stake. She broke up her home and moved into the main building at Wesleyan. Only her two daughters and Miss Mitt moved with her, for Miss Millie was now making her home with Mr. and Mrs. Jim Cobb.

The period that followed was one of the most trying of Mrs. Cobb's life. Dr. Bass died a few months after she became lady principal and some six months later her sister Emma died while paying a visit to her at the college.

In her work too she found many difficulties; the position she held was so new that her duties were undefined. She tried to be tactful, but it takes a long time even now for the average small college to

digest a dean. And how much more difficult was it thirty years ago for a conservative college to swallow a "lady principal." The trouble was not with the students. They were loyalty itself. But it was hard to effect a satisfactory division of labor between a president who knew nothing of the history and background of the institution and a lady principal who had these things at her finger tips.

It was inevitable that difficulties should come, and come they did. Within nine years three presidents had come and gone. The first stayed two years; the second two; and the third, five years. The old outworn policy of leasing the college was abandoned and each man who became president made a contribution to the life of the institution. Two of the three left the college richer in material equipment than they found it; but at best it was a period of change and readjustment—not a time of constructive growth such as had been possible under Dr. Bass's long administration.

During the year-and-a-half of Major Cobb's illness Mrs. Cobb had retired from the Conference Missionary Society and from all club work. These duties were not resumed after she moved into the college. She gave herself unreservedly to her teaching, her association with the students, and her efforts to solve the problems of the college. In her teaching and in the personal contact with the students, she met with success as she always had done; but in her administrative duties she was constantly

baffled. She felt that her work as lady principal was a failure, but there were many who did not agree with her.

One discriminating observer had this to say about the work that she felt was so fruitless: "To no one factor during all that time does the college owe so much as to the work of Mrs. Cobb. She was the conserving influence during the difficult years of transition."

Perhaps one of the most fruitful pieces of work which she did at this time was to make a tour of the leading colleges for women in America to study their work and bring back suggestions for the improvement of Wesleyan. This trip was undertaken at the request of the Board of Trustees, who were beginning to realize that Wesleyan must become a standard college.

Mrs. Cobb visited Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, and Goucher. She made a thorough study of the work in these colleges, going into the classrooms and auditing the classes. When she came home she reported that in the colleges she had visited she found that the curriculum was the same and the methods the same as those used at Wesleyan. But Wesleyan could not gain recognition as a Class A college because it lacked equipment and endowment. She said, "I have come back sick at heart because of Wesleyan's handicaps."

Later on, Wesleyan was recognized by the Board

of Education of the Southern Methodist Church as a Class A college, and this was widely heralded in the literature sent out by the institution; but the distinction thus gained was so far from being what Mrs. Cobb desired that she spoke of it almost with contempt. She knew Wesleyan must not rest until she reached the standard of a nationally recognized Class A college.

XXVII

MRS. COBB'S RETURN TO MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

WHILE Mrs. Cobb was living at Wesleyan one of the presiding elders of the South Georgia Conference, Rev. M. A. Morgan, came to Macon in search of a speaker to deliver an address on missions at his District Conference. At this time Mrs. Robert MacDonell was again living in Macon, as her husband had died in Mexico after they had had eight years of work together there, and she had been compelled to come home with her children. Following her return she had been elected to succeed Mrs. Cobb as Corresponding Secretary of the Conference Missionary Society, and to her Mr. Morgan went with his request. She was unable to accept, but she suggested that he secure Mrs. Cobb in her stead.

At this time Mrs. Cobb had been out of the missionary work for a number of years. She had been shut up within the walls of the college, where, as someone said, "changes and misunderstandings had discouraged her, and constant self-effacement had made her lose confidence in her own powers of achievement." Then, too, she shrank from going before the public in any way, because she had made

no speeches since her husband's death. There had been no cloudless dawns since Chanticleer went away. When the invitation was presented to her, she said "I can not do it." But Mrs. MacDonell and Mr. Morgan would take no denial. Tochie's love gave her discernment, and she realized that in Mrs. Cobb's depressed state of mind, she was like a great surgeon who had lost his nerve. It would take some outside influence to make her do again what she had done so often and so well. She determined to be that influence. Stepping boldly into the now vacant position at the foot of the tree in Wonderland, she turned upon her teacher and commanded her to climb! The magic worked.

With a look of tender love at the young friend whom she herself had trained, Mrs. Cobb said, "If you think I can do it, Tochie, I will try."

When Mrs. Cobb reached the place where the meeting was to be held she found that her audience would be composed largely of preachers—a formidable gathering indeed. But having consented to try she did her best with the result that those who heard her were delighted. She herself was so happy over the success of this occasion that she always insisted that Mr. Morgan had "discovered her." Perhaps he had, for he certainly clipped the cords of self-distrust that bound her, and set her free for a larger service.

This was the turning point in Mrs. Cobb's life. It was not long until she was back in the missionary

society and the various clubs working with all her former zest. About this time she was elected president of the Mulberry Street Missionary Society, and immediately that organization took on new life.

Mrs. Cobb caught me with guile, said a gifted member of the Mulberry Street Society. I was not interested in missionary work and so had never joined the society. But on one occasion when Mrs. Cobb was planning for a fine program with specially invited guests, she asked me to prepare a paper on the history of our local church. She realized that I was familiar with history because I was the granddaughter of a preacher who had twice served our church; but her real purpose was to overcome my indifference, and get me into the work of the society.

I complied with her request and read the paper; and at the close of the meeting I was astonished to hear Mrs. Cobb announce: "We will have a fine program at the next meeting, the first item of which will be the latest news from Mexico and Brazil given by Miss Loula Glass." I gasped as she called my name; but I accepted the challenge, and went out to prepare the paper. I read as I had never read before. I knew nothing at all about my subject, and I was in terror lest I should give something that was antiquated.

That was my introduction to missionary work. From that time forward, I was an active member of the local society, and before long I was drawn into the conference work by being elected Recording Secretary of the Woman's Missionary Society of South Georgia. When I accepted the position I received a letter from Mrs. Cobb thanking me for taking it, and saying that I was her "find." I held this position for many years; and later on, when the Home and Foreign Societies were united, I became the recording secretary of the new organization. All this time Mrs.

Cobb kept in close touch with my work, and often encouraged me by complimenting my minutes.

If I have been of any use at all it is due to Mrs. Cobb's ingenuity and tact. I know now that she had prayed over the whole matter before she challenged me in public on that day when I first attended the missionary society.

The following illustration of how Mrs. Cobb got a clubwoman to take part in the work of the missionary society has been given by Mrs. Flewellyn Holt:

I was an indifferent member of the missionary society. I had never attended more than half a dozen meetings, but I was an active worker in the D. A. R.'s, where I held the office of treasurer in the Chapter of which Mrs. Cobb was regent.

When Mrs. Cobb was made president of our missionary society she took advantage of my absence one day and had me elected treasurer. She saw me afterwards, and begged me to accept the office; and I did so feeling that it would be an honor to work under her.

That was twenty-five years ago and I still hold that office in that society to-day.

I did not go to school to Mrs. Cobb. That was my misfortune. But I do not believe that any of her pupils could have cared for her more than I did. I loved her! During her travels over the world, every now and then, I would get a card from her, or some other token showing that she had not forgotten me.

Another feature of the local missionary work in which Mrs. Cobb was greatly interested was the missionary society among the students at Wesleyan. Under her leadership this auxiliary became one of

the most active organizations in the college. Four students who were members of this society at this time volunteered for missionary service, and a few years later everyone of them was sent out to the foreign field.

From far-away Korea, one of the four, Miss Sallie Kate Cooper, has written what the missionary society at Wesleyan meant in her life as follows:

> Only one evening do I remember; but the message that evening through Mrs. Cobb in the power of the Holy Spirit was the direct cause of my volunteering for mission work. She was inspired by the fact that one Wesleyan girl, who was very near to her, was in China; and her message was on the needs of China and the work which this girl was doing there. I was less than the least of all the bright and talented girls in my class; but when the Master's call came I could not be disobedient to the Heavenly vision. So I answered, "Lord, here I am; just use me when and where Thou wilt."
>
> Sometimes I tremble to think what might have happened had that message not been given by Mrs. Cobb while I was at Wesleyan.

XXVIII

MRS. COBB LEAVES WESLEYAN TO BECOME THE ASSOCIATE SECRETARY OF THE WOMAN'S BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

OWING to the various changes at Wesleyan Mrs. Cobb retired from lady principalship in 1890 and moved back to her own home; but she continued as head of the department of English Literature. This change gave her a greater measure of freedom and she was soon back in her old position in the Conference Missionary Society, Mrs. MacDonell having meantime gone to Nashville as Secretary of the Woman's Board of Home Missions.

Because of Mrs. Cobb's friendship with Dr. Allen, China had always been the field that held her greatest interest. Something occurred at this time which more closely bound her to that country. Mary Culler offered herself as a missionary and was sent out to China. This was the first member of Mrs. Cobb's family to become a missionary, and the tie between the aunt and niece grew to be like that between mother and daughter, as Mary Culler took up the work that so long had been dear to her aunt.

Mrs. Cobb was now at the zenith of her usefulness in Georgia, both as a teacher and as a leader in all movements for human uplift. She was nearing her sixtieth birthday. She looked much younger, and her capacity for work was unlimited.

She had always said that she intended to retire from teaching when she was sixty. It is doubtful whether she would have been allowed to carry out this purpose had not an urgent call come for her to enter a larger field of service.

Previous to this time the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions had had only one salaried officer—an administrative secretary—but now the women felt that the time had arrived when they must have an associate secretary, one who could visit the mission lands and then come home and make reports to the auxiliaries throughout the church. This question was considered at the meeting of the Board which was held in April, 1904. It was decided to create the new office. At the election which followed, Mrs. Cobb was chosen on the first ballot, the vote being almost unanimous.

The proposed work made a great appeal to Mrs. Cobb. She accepted the office feeling that it represented a call of God to her.

Both of her daughters were now married and living away from Macon. By a happy coincidence Mary's new home was in Nashville, the city where her headquarters were to be. This made it easier to leave Macon. As she made ready to do so, she

found that it would be very hard for her to sever her connection with Wesleyan. She had been teaching there for more than forty years and her life was rooted in the institution.

Moreover, another change of administration had just taken place. The new president was Col. DuPont Guerry of Macon. At the call of his fellow trustees, he had sacrificed a splendid law practice to accept the position at Wesleyan.

Mrs. Cobb was delighted with the way in which this new official was building up the attendance and strengthening the faculty. She found it a real joy to work with him. This made it harder to say good-bye and go away. But she comforted herself with the thought that she could still work for Wesleyan wherever she went.

To her mind there were two outstanding things that remained to be accomplished. The standard of Wesleyan must be raised to that of a real Class A college, and women must be admitted to membership on the Board of Trustees. For these things she had worked in the past and for them she would continue to work.

And so in the month of May, 1904, she taught her last class, closed her desk in the old study hall for the last time, and made ready for her last commencement.

A surprise awaited her at this commencement. For some time she had been president of the Alumnae Association, but she had resigned in view of the

fact that she was changing her place of residence. When the Association met to consider her resignation, the members were inconsolable. A committee was appointed to ask for a place on the commencement program to offer a tribute of love and appreciation to Mrs. Cobb.

When the day came, Mrs. Walter J. Grace, as the representative of the association, presented Mrs. Cobb with a handsome silver pitcher. Resolutions were then read, and these are given in full below because they seem to express so aptly the feelings which Mrs. Cobb's students had for her:

Forty-one years ago you entered upon your work as a teacher in Wesleyan College. We thought you were here for life, and when the news came that you had been called to leave your "loved employ" and enter into other fields, we could not believe it was true.

Identified as you are with every interest of the college, with every interest of the church, with every worthy interest in Macon, it seems almost impossible to let you go. When we would express our gratitude to you for what you have been to the college, when we would try to make you understand how we will feel your absence, our pen refuses to write, our tongues to speak.

As a teacher full of love and sympathy for your students; as a friend, faithful and true, we have always known you. Your life has touched our lives and made them better. Your influence will live with those you leave behind and their prayers will go with you when the oceans separate us. We have looked to you for advice, counsel and example. We have trusted your judgment; we have confided in your wisdom;

we have depended upon you to lead us. In the midst of varied and perplexing duties, your energy and enthusiasm have always been an inspiration. You have never disappointed us.

A few years ago, Dr. Young J. Allen of China wrote to the church in Georgia: "Send us a woman who cannot be spared at home." Our gift was one of Wesleyan's daughters, the sainted Laura J. Haygood. She gave her life for China. Again the call comes to us from the church, "Send us the woman who cannot be spared at home."

Our response is, "We give you our best, our Alice Culler Cobb."

Mrs. R. F. Burden
Mattiebel Pope
Lella A. Clark
Committee.

With this tribute of love in her hand Mrs. Cobb went out from Wesleyan in the larger life that lay before her.

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, 'A whole I planned,'
Youth shows but half; trust God; see all, nor be afraid."

XXIX

A WORLD-TRAVELER

MRS. COBB was a world-traveler. She never seemed aware of discomfort or fatigue. To her enthusiastic nature each trip was a new adventure. The discipline of her former life was invaluable to her now. For more than forty years she had accustomed herself to long hours of work, intense concentration, and a few hours of sleep. Therefore, in her new work she was able to carry out a heavy program of travel, public speaking, organization, and correspondence.

All over the South she went, stirring the women to new zeal, better organization, and greater liberality. A single entry from her note book will suffice to show the strenuousness of the program which she undertook:

"At Fort Worth I talked to the Sunday school in the morning, the women in the afternoon, and to four hundred students at the Polytechnic school at night. I reached Texarkana at 2:45 P.M., talked at 3:30, and left at 7 P.M. for Nashville."

Mr. Morgan's work in thrusting Mrs. Cobb forward as a public speaker was bearing abundant fruit. In her addresses she spoke with clearness

and force, and yet with great simplicity of manner. One of her pet aversions was a well-known woman's organization whose public speakers were in her estimation loud of voice, and masculine in manner. Mrs. Cobb had the low voice of the typical southern woman, yet she always made herself heard. Her own opinion of her speeches was somewhat amusing. To her they were always a failure, but not so to the audience.

One clubwoman said of her:

> Mrs. Cobb was a wonderful *raconteur*. She always had interesting experiences, and she always told them well. She met influential people wherever she went, because she associated easily with such people. She had the appearance; she understood the psychology of dress; she had social graces; and she was a good speaker, animated, interesting, charming.

Mexico

Mexico was the first mission field Mrs. Cobb visited. In her travels in America she went about alone, but when she went to foreign countries it was her custom to invite one of her former pupils who was able to take such a trip to go with her as a traveling companion. Such an arrangement brought about mutual benefit. Miss Greta Garbutt, now Mrs. Greta Ware, was her companion on this her first visit to Mexico.

The principal cities of Mexico were visited and Mrs. Cobb was alive to every new experience. She

ate tamales, rode burros, and went sight-seeing with the same avidity that she visited classrooms, presided over committees and interviewed the dignitaries of the government. Nothing escaped her—the new flowers and trees, the scenery, the architecture, the art, the drawn work, the pottery, the habits and customs of the people, the status of government education, the political situation, the effects of Catholicism on national life, and the outlook for Protestant Christianity.

From every place Mrs. Cobb wrote back inspiring messages to the home church. Here are some extracts from her letters:

LAREDO.

I have caught a new vision of missionary work and with it a deep sense of my own weakness and insufficiency.

SALTILLO.

Mr. Osuna, the Principal of the State Normal School also State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and a highly cultured man and a minister of the gospel, assists Miss Roberts several hours a week in her school, having charge of the philosophy and pedagogy.

Several years ago the government sent Mr. Osuna to the Normal School at Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and gave him the privilege of selecting five young men to go with him. After two years they returned and all have been engaged since 1898 in the State Normal School. They all teach in our mission school, and are earnest, enthusiastic teachers. I talked with all of them, attended their recitations, and found them educated, cultured men.

San Luis Potosi.

At this place I saw a sight common in Mexico, the burial of the dead without religious ceremony because of the poverty of the afflicted family. The body, followed by a few friends, was borne to the rented grave on the shoulders of two men. In a hurried manner it was lowered to its temporary resting place while friends sent off rockets to scare evil spirits.

Ignorance and superstition and fear of the priesthood hold the people in the most abject bondage from which nothing but the truth through Jesus Christ can make them free.

Mexico City.

The Poet Laureate offered his services to Miss Case, and has been installed as Professor of Spanish Literature.

Miss Case finds it no easy task to preside over a school of such large proportions, to deal with patrons of such varied tastes and conditions, to work with so many teachers of different grades, both American and Mexican, to keep books, receive visitors, settle difficulties, and meet all demands upon her time, both reasonable and unreasonable, with patience and equanimity, yet she does all these things, and seems equal to every emergency.

Durango.

This city was the home of the sainted Robert MacDonell, for whom the school and church are named.

Here I have listened to the stories of men in the banks who have studied under Miss Tydings. I heard them tell how on one occasion when a howling mob threatened the schooi, crying, "Death to the Protestants," the Jefe politico held them at bay because of his personal knowledge of Miss Tydings, gained while studying English under her. Another officer, who had been her pupil in English, remained near the school all night to protect it from the angry crowd, who in

their rage threatened to kill him for the protection given to Protestants.

RETURNING THROUGH TEXAS.

I can now say that I have visited all our work in Mexico. I have been into every schoolroom; I have heard every teacher conduct recitations; I have seen every dormitory, kitchen, washroom, ironingroom; attended Sunday Schools, League meetings, society debates, church services, both American and Mexican, made as thorough an investigation as I know how; and I can conscientiously say that it is all good, very good, and if the women of the homeland would work as enthusiastically, as religiously, as sacrificingly as do our missionaries, there would be money enough in our treasury to meet the needs of the foreign field, and faith, and love, and prayer enough to claim Mexico and the uttermost parts of the earth for Christ.

Mrs. Cobb's lively sense of humor was one of the blessings that she took about with her. It not only drew people to her, but it helped her to relax. A story which illustrates this fact is told by a former student of Wesleyan who at that time lived in Texas. She says:

When Mrs. Cobb was returning from Mexico, she stopped over at the request of the ladies of my city to give an address on missions. I heard of the proposed visit and asked the Methodist ladies to allow me to entertain her. I felt somewhat timid, and yet quite proud, as I went down to the station and bore off the woman of the hour. That evening the lecture came off with dignity. I was so proud of my old teacher, yet the Wesleyan habit was strong upon me and I was a little in awe of her.

After the lecture we went home, and just as I was wondering what highbrow subject to introduce, Mrs.

Cobb surprised me by saying, "This is the first time in many months that I have seen anyone from Macon. It is a good time to gossip. Have you heard so and so?" I was nearly knocked off my feet, but I played up to her lead, and told her all the news and gossip that I had heard. Mrs. Cobb and I sat there and "Oh'd" and "Ah'd" and "Have-you-heard-ed" until 1.00 A.M. I never knew how human Mrs. Cobb was until that night.

XXX

MRS. COBB VISITS JAPAN AND CHINA

"MY interest in missions was born in a cradle in China in 1878," so said Mrs. Cobb in speaking of Dr. Allen's timely visit to her home and of the Allen baby who was named for her at that time.

When that baby was a woman, grown, and Mrs. Cobb herself was a missionary secretary, the opportunity came for her to visit the land where her zeal for missions had been cradled. She planned her itinerary and found that she would need to be out of America for fourteen months. That seemed a long time when she thought of those she was leaving, but she recognized that it was her work that was taking her, and that she had no choice but to go.

On this trip, as was her custom, she had as a traveling companion one of her own pupils, but this time the Wesleyan daughter went, not for the trip, but as a new recruit for the mission field. Nettie Peacock had listened eagerly to Mrs. Cobb's teaching, and had been an earnest member of the missionary society. One day she went to a missionary conference at which Mrs. Cobb made a stirring talk on the need of workers in China. Before the speech

was finished, Nettie had received her missionary call, and had surrendered for service in China.

Following this she studied for two years at Scarritt Bible and Training School in Kansas City, and was planning to go to the field in the summer of 1906. But just at that time she was taken ill, and was not well enough to travel until some six months later when Mrs. Cobb was ready to sail. So in this unexpected way it came about that teacher and pupil were able to go to the field together. At San Francisco the travelers boarded the Pacific mail liner *Mongolia* and steamed out of the Golden Gate. They passed Christmas day at sea and arrived in Japan early in January, 1907. At this time the Woman's Board had no missionary in Japan, the work for women in that country being under the direction of the General Board; but Mrs. Cobb's interests were as broad as the Kingdom of God, and she felt that she ought to see all the work that was being carried on by her own church, and as much as possible of that being done by other churches. Accordingly she left the steamer in Yokohama and spent three weeks visiting the mission stations in Japan.

Time proved the wisdom of her course; for within eight years, upon request of the General Department of the Board of Missions, the Department of Woman's Work took charge of the evangelistic work for women in the Japan mission. During her visit Mrs. Cobb had unofficially spied out the land,

and her investigations, no doubt, hastened the time when the women went in with new workers and a fresh supply of money, to possess the land.

As Mrs. Cobb walked down the gang plank in Shanghai a patriarchal gentleman with clear eye, firm step, and long flowing white beard advanced to meet her, and solemnly bent to kiss her. It was Dr. Young J. Allen. The dream that three people had been dreaming for thirty years had at last come true. Alice Cobb was with her friends Dr. and Mrs. Allen in their beloved China. Mrs. Cobb's attitude, both as a missionary secretary and a traveler, was that of a learner. She said again and again, "Everything is a surprise to me. I thought that I had studied the field, and that I knew a great deal about China; but I find that I know nothing at all." This attitude on the part of Mrs. Cobb led one missionary to say of her that the Board official was lost sight of in the woman—the woman who wanted to be everyone's friend.

Mrs. Cobb traveled all over the mission, visiting every city in which the Board had missionaries. In Shanghai she was delighted at the status of McTyeire School where Miss Laura Haygood had spent her missionary life. This was the school which Mrs. Cobb and her little Juniors had helped to build so many years before. It was now an accredited high school with full courses in English as well as in Chinese, and its graduates which were drawn from the best families all over China were admitted to the leading colleges in America.

Other mission schools for girls which Mrs. Cobb visited were the Laura Haygood Memorial in Soochow, a high school; the Davidson Memorial in Soochow, a grammar grade boarding school; the Virginia School in Huchow, a high school; the Memphis School in Huchow, a school for women and girls presided over by Miss Lochie Rankin, the first missionary sent out by the Woman's Board; the Susan B. Wilson School, a grammar grade boarding school in Sungkiang; the Hayes Wilkins Bible School in Sungkiang, a school for the training of Bible Women; and Columbia Day School, a thriving school of grammar grade in Changchow, a city where the missionaries had been driven out with stones just a few years before this time.

All of this work and many rural schools besides had been developed in the twenty-nine years that had elapsed since the time Dr. Allen had had that first talk with Mrs. Cobb about the possibilities of Christian educational work in China.

With the interest of a trained teacher, Mrs. Cobb went into every classroom in every school, and listened to the instruction given by every teacher—whether American or Chinese. And just because she was such a good teacher herself she could not help singling out the two best teachers, and insisting—confidentially, of course—that they were the two best missionaries on the field. She had great respect for any missionary who lived in daily association with the unabridged dictionary.

Mrs. Cobb enjoyed visiting the Chinese ladies in

their homes, and she always tried to converse with them whether there was an interpreter at hand or not. Perhaps this friendliness had something to do with the name which the Chinese gave her. They called her, "The Honorable, Elderly Married Lady with the Benign Face."

Mary Culler looking on thought of the sternness which had formerly been one of Mrs. Cobb's most striking characteristics, and she realized what the grace of God had done for her aunt in softening her nature and fitting her for her new work.

Mrs. Cobb was invited to a native wedding soon after her arrival in China. The ceremony and accompanying festivities, which were held in the home of the groom, began at noon and lasted until midnight, with two Chinese feasts thrown in. It was winter, and the house was unheated, after the manner of all Chinese houses in Central China; but Mrs. Cobb stayed the full twelve hours, and ate the two feasts as best she could with the help of a pair of slender silver chop sticks. It was at this wedding that an elegantly dressed Chinese lady said to her, through an interpreter, "Oh, how nice it must be to live in America where the styles don't change." This speech made in all sincerity appealed to Mrs. Cobb as the prize joke of her whole trip, and she carefully treasured it to tell to her fashionable friends when she returned home.

The dangers which lurk in China did not appeal to Mrs. Cobb. She never seemed afraid, either of

the people or of their diseases. Once cholera was raging in Soochow. She was planning to go to that city, but Mary Culler interfered and hurried her off to the mountains instead.

There was one time when Mrs. Cobb was truly frightened—or said she was. Her version of the affair was as follows:

One day I came from Shanghai to Soochow on a late afternoon train. I was to stay at Moka Garden, Mary Culler's home, where I made my headquarters while I was in China. This place was about three miles from the station. On the train I met a number of missionaries from Korea who were going to the same place. When we arrived at the Soochow station, Mary Culler met us, saying that she had engaged a little houseboat which would take the party into the city. I had had some experiences with these boats, which moved at the rate of two miles an hour and make you seasick besides; so I asked Mary Culler to call a sedan chair for me.

When the chair had been called Mary Culler put me in, saying to the bearers, "Mo-Ka-Hwo-Yo"—the Chinese name of the place to which I was going. Then she left me and got into the boat with the other guests.

The Soochow station is about a mile outside the walls of the city. At first the road lay along the bank of a lonely canal, and I began to feel uncomfortable. Here I was all alone in a strange land where I could not speak a word of the language. What if the man didn't take me to the right place? At this point I tried to remember what Mary Culler had said to the chair bearers. What was it? Something like "Mocha-hwo." I realized that I had forgotten the fourth syllable, but I determined to hold fast to the other three —"Mo-cha-hwo," "Mo-cha-hwo." About this time we

passed through the city gate and entered a narrow canyon-like street that was filled with a seething mass of pushing; yelling, Chinese humanity. I thought that it might be a mob, and I shrank back as far as possible in my little, box-like vehicle; but I could not get entirely out of sight. In this excitement, I forgot another syllable in the name of my destination. All I could now remember was "Mocha." I was expecting to be mobbed at any minute, and I began to wish the chair bearers would take me on some quiet street. Just then they turned into an unfrequented, dimly-lighted street, and instantly I realized that this was an eligible place for murders. Oh, why didn't they take me back to that crowded, brightly-lighted street? Thus I alternated between the fear of being mobbed and the fear of being murdered; and all of the time I was saying over and over to myself, "Mocha, Mocha"—the rest I could not remember.

Finally the bearers took me up a street that seemed utterly unfamiliar and set me down in front of a foreign built house. I decided to go in and ask how to get to "Mocha"—something; and then I went in, and there I was—at home. The men were bringing me right all the time, and the missionaries told me the mob I had seen was just an ordinary, Chinese crowd, going home from work.

But some of the experiences which Mrs. Cobb met in China could not be made into pleasant stories. They left too deep a pain in her heart.

Once about midnight, as she and Mrs. Gaither were returning to Sungkiang from an itinerating trip, Mrs. Cobb was startled by the loud, wierd shriek of a woman. Mrs. Gaither explained that someone was ill, and that the woman who had shrieked was "calling the spirit" of the person who

was the patient. Each person's body, so Mrs. Gaither said, was thought to be inhabited by six spirits, and when one became ill it was supposed that one of these spirits had left the patient.

"At such a time," said Mrs. Gaither, "one member of the family stands at the bedside and calls to the spirit, saying 'Come back, come back.' While another relative rushes out in search of some living creature which is supposed to contain the missing spirit. The woman in the patient's room and the searcher on the outside call to each other, in a dismal, chanting style, one crying, 'Come back, come back,' and the other replying in gloomy tones. When something living, be it bird, fowl or insect, is found, the searcher cries, 'It is found; the spirit will return.' And then the living thing is taken triumphantly into the sick room."

After Mrs. Cobb heard this story she would lie in her bed late at night listening to her Chinese sisters shrieking and calling, as they went about in the darkness, imploring the spirits of their sick loved ones to return. Her heart ached as she heard the weird sounds and she wrote home:

> China needs the Gospel; China needs more missionaries; China calls to the people of America for help. May the words "I am debtor, I am debtor," ring through the hearts of the people in the homeland until they respond, "I am willing, I am ready." Who will come? Who will give liberally?

XXXI

MRS. COBB VISITS KOREA

KOREA, the broken-hearted nation! Thither Mrs. Cobb went after several months in China. Following her usual custom she secured Miss Ethel Allen of Shanghai, a Wesleyan girl, to go as far as North China.

Peking was visited, and Mrs. Cobb's artistic soul reveled in every antique relic and every golden-hued, turned-up roof. The Great Wall of China was explored on donkeys and Mrs. Cobb enjoyed the ride almost as much as she did the wall.

Before they could go farther they were startled by the news of Dr. Allen's sudden death in Shanghai. It was hard to say which was the most bereaved, the daughter or the life-long friend. Tenderly Mrs. Cobb carried Ethel to the home of her brother, Mr. Edgar Allen, in Petaiho, and sadly she proceeded on her journey to Korea. She felt that her loss was irreparable.

In Korea Mrs. Cobb met an entirely different situation from that in China. The mission work was new, yet the people were flocking to the churches to believe and were begging for schools in which their children could be educated. Mrs. Cobb's heart was thrilled as she saw the great oppor-

tunities, but burdened when she viewed the meager equipment. In Seoul she looked at the little house which was dignified by the name of "Carolina Institute," and then wrote in a letter to the home church:

> When our women at home learn the blessedness of giving, then will our Board crown one of the hills of Seoul with a school that will be a light to those in darkness, a joy to the oppressed, a refuge to the down-trodden, and a salvation to this broken-hearted nation.

In Songdo she found a school for girls that had been organized on a novel basis. It was a project started by the Korean Christians. They had collected the salary, by subscription, for a native teacher, and had come to the authorities of the mission presenting the money with the additional proposition that the patrons would furnish seven measures of rice (about half a gallon) and twenty-five cents a month for each child, if the missionaries would open a school for their daughters. The proposition had been accepted.

The fathers, with a small bundle of clothing and the rice on their backs, had walked with their daughters to Songdo, many of them coming sixty miles, and one as far as a hundred miles. Over the narrow foot paths the pilgrims had trudged, climbing the mountains, crossing the streams, walking on wearily, day after day, in order that the girls might learn to read the story of Christ and get an education.

Mrs. Cobb was deeply moved when she inspected the building which housed the school, for it was nothing more than an ordinary three-room Korean dwelling with mud walls and a thatched roof. Two of the rooms were eight by sixteen, and the third was eight by eight. In these three rooms twenty-three Korean girls ate and slept, studied and recited. And there were other girls, so Mrs. Cobb was told, who had taken the long tramp across the mountains, only to be told on arrival that there was no room for them in the school. Sadly they had turned away and taken the long tramp home again.

In writing from Songdo to the women of the home church, Mrs. Cobb said:

> If you could but see the eagerness with which these Koreans seek the truth, and the readiness with which they turn to Christ, your heart would burn within you, and you would be ready to do all in your power to claim this land for the God of the nations.
>
> We must have a good school here, a large school, well equipped, well provided with teachers and leaders, so that education and the gospel may be granted to this oppressed, down-trodden people who are stretching out their hands for help.
>
> There should be one dozen women sent to Korea during the next three years, and $30,000.00 appropriated during the next year. Do not say I am letting my enthusiasm get the better of my judgment, for a dozen women would not be able to meet the emergency now thrust upon our workers here. Say rather that God is answering the prayer of James 1:5 and giving me wisdom, in the clearness of vision, to see something of Korea's great need, and courage to ask great things of the home church.

In answer to Mrs. Cobb's appeals her old conference, South Georgia, took up Korea as its special field. Mrs. Cobb did not get the twelve missionaries for Korea within the time named, but she did get nine, and that was a splendid increase for that time. Other conferences became aroused to the opportunities in Korea through her appeals and those made by others; before long splendid buildings, made of stone quarried on the lots where they were built, began to take the place of the shabby little shells of mud and thatch that had cradled the work.

In Wonsan, on the east coast, Mrs. Cobb saw the need of a Bible Training School for women. Through her appeals to the home church the school became a reality, and the grateful missionaries named it in her honor. The present principal of the Alice Cobb Bible School is Miss Kate Cooper, one of Mrs. Cobb's Wesleyan pupils. Miss Cooper has this to say about the school:

The Bible School has been the place of training for all of our Bible Women in the Wonsan District, and we have helped to train the women from the other districts as well. Years have passed since the school was started and now a new generation has arisen. Young men preparing for the ministry, and young women for Christian service, are coming from the homes of women who were trained in the Alice Cobb Bible School years ago. At present we are using our buildings for every kind of woman's work—Bible Women's Conferences, missionary meetings, temperance meetings, night school for women and girls,

young women's training classes, and prayer meetings. We sometimes call it our "House of Prayer for All Nations."

While Mrs. Cobb was in the Orient she sent regular letters back to the home church which were published in the *Woman's Missionary Advocate*. In her own easy style, developed by long years of teaching and writing, she described what she saw and did much to make the mission fields real to the women of the missionary societies.

There was one thing, however, which she did not mention, either in her letters or elsewhere. While in the Orient she contracted a disease peculiar to that part of the world—one that comes from a germ which is taken into the system with impure food or unboiled water, and which settles in the intestines. Once there it is almost impossible to get rid of it. During the Spanish-American war many American soldiers contracted this disease while fighting the battles of their country in the Philippines. This soldier of the Cross met the same dangerous enemy in the Orient and had to leave the battlefield wounded. She finished out the full time she had intended to stay in the East, but she was destined never to be as well again as she had been before.

XXXII

MRS. COBB RETURNS TO AMERICA BY WAY OF EUROPE

"I HAVE wanted to see Europe all my life; but I am afraid now that I will have to wait and see it from heaven." So Mrs. Cobb had said before her work took her to the Orient; but when she reached China she was nearly half-way round the world, so that it would cost but little more to return to America by way of Suez and the Mediterranean. The only thing that made her hesitate was the extra time involved, so she settled that problem by giving up her salary for the three months that were to be spent on the journey home. The extra traveling expenses, of course, she bore herself. It was just time for Mary Culler to have a furlough and that made it possible for Mrs. Cobb to take her on the trip through Europe. Again it was a Wesleyan daughter who was her traveling companion.

The year 1907 was a year of financial panic. While Mrs. Cobb was in China one bank in which she had stock failed, and she lost all that she had put into it. She took this loss with characteristic cheerfulness, saying, "I do not feel the loss half as

much as if someone had stolen $50.00 from my purse."

Part of the money she carried in her travels was in the form of drafts on a New York bank and part in a letter of credit. By the time she reached Egypt, New York banks were beginning to fail, and the newspapers were filled with the accounts of the panic that had ensued. Nothing seemed stable. Mrs. Cobb was needing ready money, so she decided to use her letter of credit which had not been touched up to that time. She took this to a Port Said Bank only to be informed that the letter was undated. It would have to be sent back to America to be dated. Within an hour it was on its way; and Mrs. Cobb had set out to get money with nothing but the doubtful New York Exchange to offer in return. The British banker who rejected her letter of credit had also turned down her New York Exchange; so she knew she would have to try elsewhere.

She was always resourceful in emergencies, and after lunch she went to the Imperial Ottoman Bank taking Mary Culler and another lady with her. She asked for the manager and was shown into a private room. After a little, an intelligent Egyptian gentleman who was able to speak good English came in. Mrs. Cobb told her story, and presented several of the drafts on New York. The man hesitated, and kept talking; and while he talked he studied the faces of his visitors. Suddenly he asked, "Are you

missionaries?" and when the reply had been given he said, "I know a missionary here. I learned English in her night school. I will cash the draft; if they are not all right, you can send me the money afterwards. Don't you want me to call a carriage and send you out to meet the missionary under whom I studied? She might be able to take you to call on my wife; and that would enable you to see the inside of an Egyptian home."

Talk of Aladdin and his lamp! From that moment onward those questionable drafts were like some potent charm, procuring all needed cash, opening doors fast-closed against ordinary tourists, and finally securing the bank manager himself as a guide and interpreter on a shopping expedition! But was it the drafts that worked the magic, or was it the charm of the woman who bore them? Those who knew Mrs. Cobb, and those who did not have that privilege, but have read these pages aright, will be able to answer. Some time later after Mrs. Cobb had left Egypt, the newspapers announced the failure of the bank on which the drafts were drawn; but this proved to be a mistake and everything worked out all right.

Mary Culler had not dreamed much about Europe; she never expected to get there. But she had thought about the pyramids. She wanted to climb one. On the steamer she had heard that the government required each climber to employ three guides for the ascent. This was done to prevent

accidents. Mary Culler said that she was willing to hire the guides, but she did not intend they should touch her. She would climb that pyramid unaided. A fellow passenger offered to bet her a box of kid gloves that she could not do it. She did not bet; but it was religion, not risk, that kept her from doing so.

In Cairo the little party were having their luncheon in the hotel. The dragoman waited outside. A third lady was now in the party, a fellow-traveler met for the first time on the steamer. She had asked to join Mrs. Cobb and Mary Culler on their trip, and then had tried to direct the movements of the party, assuming an "I-know-all-about-it; I-will-gladly-show-you" kind of air. This type of person is evident too frequently.

At the table in Cairo she turned on Mary Culler and said: "Miss White, you surely are not thinking of climbing the pyramid when we go out to Gizeh this afternoon. You must remember that there are three of us in this party, and we are employing the dragoman together. Your aunt does not intend to climb the pyramid, and I have no idea of doing so. It will keep two of us waiting for hours and make us lose a lot of the dragoman's time, if you insist upon doing so. It will certainly be selfish of you if you go."

Poor Mary Culler stammered out something about not wanting to be selfish, and being willing to do whatever was best for the party; but the rest of

the meal she kept her eyes on her plate. The light of Egypt had died for her.

When they went upstairs to put on their wraps, Mrs. Cobb burst out: "Mary Culler, I want to tell you that you are going to climb that pyramid. I will not hear to anything else. The idea of your giving it up now. Tell that woman that I want you to climb it."

It was the old Alice of the Wesleyan Wonderland who spoke. The note of command and of expectancy was in her voice. The grateful Mary Culler went downstairs and told the lady that she might take the dragoman as soon as she had seen the pyramids, and go wherever she liked; but that Mrs. Cobb and herself would remain at Gizeh until the climb had been made.

The truth was Mrs. Cobb would have made the climb herself but for the blow which the Oriental germ had dealt her.

The thrill of climbing was all that Mary Culler expected it to be. The three special guides were employed for the ascent as the law required; but they did not have to touch her. Indeed, one of them got tired of trailing after, and sat down when he was about half way up, saying that he was dizzy.

The climax came at the apex where a Wonderland of beauty was spread out before the climber's eye. To the north was the delta of the Nile, where the land was meshed with myriads of mirror-like streams, and studded with stately palms. Out be-

yond the delta was the blue Mediterranean. To the west was the Sahara, and over it the brilliant glory of the setting sun. To the south was the verdant valley of the Nile, and the mysteries of central Africa. To the east, and immediately below, was the city of Cairo with its countless minarets shining like jewels in the sun. Beyond it gleamed the Nile; and over all was stretched the arch of a perfect rainbow whose end seemed resting in the Nile itself.

And all of this wealth of beauty was made accessible to Mary Culler because Alice Cobb was sitting far below, at the foot of the pyramid quietly waiting for her niece to come down.

A sprained shoulder is not a convenient thing to take with you when you visit Europe; that was what Mrs. Cobb took with her the rest of the way. On the steamer between Egypt and Naples she had a fall which resulted in a bad sprain. The ship's doctor, through some unaccountable mistake, told her she was suffering from rheumatism, and that she must exercise her arm. For four days she exercised the sprained shoulder, until at last she was in torture. In this condition she landed at Naples—too taken up with physical agony to see any of the beauty that she had been longing to see for a whole lifetime. She was carried to a pension, and in an hour's time a skillful Italian surgeon had relieved the worst of the pain; but she had to remain in bed for a week, and her arm had to be kept strapped to her body for a full month.

Her second Christmas away from home was spent in this crippled condition in the lonely little pension in Naples. But she took it like a soldier, and would not let her condition interfere with the sightseeing of others. The first time she left the house she went for a carriage drive. But the jolting of the carriage increased the pain in her shoulder, and she had to give up the effort. With a wry smile she said: "It is just like it was in Boston when I tried to walk for the first time after my back was hurt. I said, 'Take me back to the hotel, Major Cobb; I will never walk again.' So you can take me back now, Mary Culler. I am as certain now as I was then that *I will never walk again.*"

But she did walk, by sheer force of will, the next day. And then she found that by using her good arm to hold a hot water bag against the wounded one, she could go about in comparative comfort.

Her first sight-seeing trip was made to the city of Pompeii which she saw to the tune of a hot water bottle and a rolling chair. During the day there was a light fall of sleet; and the little round particles of ice suggested the idea that it was "raining mosaics." What mattered a few additional mosaics in a place which was as full of them as the city of Pompeii?

Mrs. Cobb was already in a weakened condition because of the germ that had fastened on her in the Orient, and now she was suffering from a painful accident. Almost any other woman in her con-

dition would have been either in a hospital with a special nurse, or on a steamer returning to America. But Mrs. Cobb chose to carry out her program as though nothing had happened; and so good a traveler and so fine a sport was she that Pompeii, Naples, Rome and Florence actually helped her to forget the pain of her injury; while Paris and London cheered her through the second stage of her suffering; namely, regaining the use of a shriveled arm. She was sixty-four years old and the accident she had sustained was no slight one; but never once did her courage or enthusiasm forsake her for a moment.

While in Italy she walked through miles of art galleries with the inevitable hot water bottle under her arm, and she enjoyed the wonderful pictures. But when her own taste was considered, it must be confessed that she preferred stores and people to paintings. So, whenever she could get Mary Culler away from the art galleries for a half day she would visit the shops, and she always came away loaded down with exquisite gifts for relatives and friends. Every beautiful thing she saw she wanted to buy for either Mary or Genie. Her niece thought she had bought enough in the Orient, the Near East. and Italy to satisfy anyone. Evidently she did not look at it that way, however, for when they were leaving Italy on their way to France she said: "Now look here, Mary Culler, I have been to see art galleries with you all over Italy. I want you to know

that when we get to Paris you have got to go to the shops with me."

A special express train from London takes passengers for the Atlantic steamers to the dock at Southampton, getting them there just in time to board the steamer. On the day when Mrs. Cobb was to sail for New York, this train was scheduled to leave London at nine o'clock in the morning. Mrs. Cobb was up by daylight, moving nervously about. She began to hurry her niece and to fret over the danger of losing the train, which, of course, would mean losing the steamer. All this was so unlike the calm, collected Mrs. Cobb that Mary Culler could not understand it, but she submitted to the inevitable, and allowed herself to be taken to the station a full hour before the time for the train to leave.

For the first time during her world journey, Mrs. Cobb had lost her head. The thought of going home was too much for her.

The steamship *Crown Princess Cecelia* was docking in New York. Mrs. Cobb was on deck, straining her eyes to catch a glimpse of Genie who was out there in the crowd on the pier. At last the long-drawn-out process of docking was over, the gangplank lowered, and Mrs. Cobb walked across into Genie's arms. Neither mother nor daughter could speak, and both began to sob. Genie's sobs lasted so long that her mother became apprehensive. Something must be wrong. Since Genie was there

in her arms, and all right, it must be Mary. And by a curious process of mother love, reasoning through imagination and deduction, she decided that Mary was dead, and that Genie was sobbing because she did not know how to break the news to her.

But Genie's sobs were sobs of joy, and Mary and the little boys—all happy and well—were waiting in Nashville to welcome the wanderer home.

XXXIII

INCREASING DUTIES

MRS. COBB, the returned traveler, was making an address in her old church in Macon, Georgia. The women of the missionary society were listening with eager interest. The speaker said:

One day while my ship was in harbor in an Oriental port, I heard a commotion among the natives who were swarming around the big vessel loading the freight. From the nature of the cries that I heard, I was sure that someone had fallen overboard. I hurried to an officer and asked him what was the matter, only to be told that it was "just a native who had fallen into the sea." No effort was made to rescue the man. My trip to the Orient has showed me that it is only Christianity that teaches the worth of the individual.

A story of exactly the opposite type has come to me from a little Christian village in China. One day a missionary who was visiting this village noticed a small, barefooted Chinese girl who was approaching the church with a heavy baby on her back.

"Is your burden heavy, little girl?"

"No," replied the girl. "This is not a burden. This is my brother."

The idea in the heart of that little Chinese girl is the solution to the missionary problem. The burden of our responsibility will not seem heavy when we realize that the man over there, without Christ, is "our brother."

While Mrs. Cobb was in Macon on this visit, she stayed, as was her custom, in the home of her stepson, Mr. J. J. Cobb; and great was the pleasure of her grandchildren as they listened to the accounts of her travels and examined the curios that she had brought home. She had never forgotten these children while she was abroad, sending them many post cards, letters, and curios, which, together with the influences in the home, had awakened in them a deep interest in missions. John B., the older of the children was now a lad of fifteen who was already thinking that some day he might be a missionary.

After visiting Macon, Mrs. Cobb went from city to city making her report and telling the story of what she had seen. Everywhere she was on the lookout for her Wesleyan daughters and other old friends. This one who was to be married must have a present; that one with the new baby must have a visit or a letter of congratulation; the one in sorrow must be comforted; and, most important of all, the one who seemed to be drifting into a life of selfish ease must be shown the Wonderland of Unselfish Service.

All classes of people were inspired by her speeches. The money that was needed to enlarge the work in China and Korea began to come in. But soon it became evident that the speaker's health was giving away. The disease she had contracted in the Orient had never been overcome. The attacks recurred from time to time and each left her

weaker than the last. Many doctors were consulted. They said that the disease was not common in America, and, therefore, they did not know what to do for her. Finally one physician, who was bolder than the rest, said that he believed that he could cure her by removing the appendix and irrigating through the opening. Since there seemed to be no hope of getting well any other way, she consented to this drastic treatment. In January, 1909, the operation was performed.

Mary was at the hospital, looking anxious and troubled. Mary Culler was there, too; for she was passing through Nashville on her way back to China. The subject of Mrs. Cobb's visit to the Orient was mentioned. Mary Culler turned to the patient and inquired, "Auntie, would you go again?"

Mrs. Cobb paused a moment, and then said, steadily, "Yes, I would."

"No, you wouldn't," said her daughter, quickly. "I will never let you put the ocean between us again." At which outbreak both Mrs. Cobb and Mary Culler laughed. But the courageous testimony of the woman on the hospital bed lingered with her niece through long years of service in China.

There was something in it akin to the words of St. Paul when he said, "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

It was not given to Mrs. Cobb to lay down her life in a direct way for the cause of Christ; but in the months that followed she did something which was, perhaps, even harder than dying. She traveled all over the South, making missionary speeches. She had a glass tube in her side, irrigating through this tube twice every day by a process so slow that it took an hour and a half for each irrigation! At first Genie went with her, and helped her; but in a little while she was doing it alone. After six months of this heroic treatment, the doctor pronounced her well, but her full measure of strength did not return.

The Board of Missions was reorganized in 1910 with several Boards that had previously functioned separately united into one. Mrs. Trueheart, who had been Mrs. Cobb's senior in office, retired at this time, and it became necessary for the women to choose her successor. The choice fell on Mrs. Cobb. She did not feel able to take on new responsibilities, because her strength had been depleted by her long illness. The women said they must have some experienced person in office during the time of readjustment that would necessarily follow the union of the Boards.

Mrs. Cobb's new office was that of Secretary for Woman's Work in the Foreign Department of the now united Board of Missions. The task was not wholly a congenial one. Most of it consisted of grinding office work coupled with complicated ad-

ministrative problems. Mrs. Cobb had had no training for such work, and all that she had to bring to it was consecration, brains, and industry.

In her administrative duties she did her best to humanize and make personal her relations with the women missionaries on the field, all of whom were now directly under her care. Her efforts in this direction are reflected in a letter written at this time to a young woman doctor who had just gone to China:

> You help to make life smooth and easy for people. What a blessing that is! Return thanks to-night for your cheerful spirit and for the love which goes out from you toward every one who is brought into contact with you. Miss Gibson says many beautiful things of your connection with the Training School, and I am sure that all these things can be said of you in connection with the hospital life. Please excuse all this; I am not given to extravagance of speech—ask my niece if I am. I have often felt that I would have made things smoother for my girls at Wesleyan if I had commended them more when they did well. It helps, I know. Ask Mary Culler also about how my husband always encouraged me to undertake almost the impossible by his great confidence in my ability to do these things.

In her work in Nashville Mrs. Cobb was cheered by the presence of her old friend, Mrs. MacDonell, who was now Secretary for Woman's Work in the Home Department of the Board of Missions. The offices of the friends were side by side. In speaking of the work which Mrs. Cobb accomplished in her new position Mrs. MacDonell said:

My most vivid recollection of Mrs. Cobb's work was her indefatigable devotion to her task. She succeeded one whom she loved tenderly, but whose feeble body was too far spent for the heavy work that she was trying to do. As a result the work of the office was in a disorganized state when Mrs. Cobb took it over; and to her fell the difficult task of re-adjustment. Many troublesome problems had to be taken up without sufficient data. She worked all day, and far into the night. And no one on the outside ever knew how greatly handicapped she was, for loyalty to her friend sealed her lips. Only those who tried to help her knew how impossible the situation was. Four years of this slavish work made it possible for Mrs. Cobb's successor to gather the threads of the work together for a forward drive. The work she did at this time was not showy enough to bring her much honor. The only true record was kept by the recording angel.

XXXIV

BEREAVED OF HER OWN

THROUGH all her arduous duties Mrs. Cobb was cheered by the love and sympathy of her two daughters. Genie came often for visits, especially in the summer when her mother was at Monteagle; and Mary's little home in Nashville had now become a real home to Mrs. Cobb and Auntie Mitt.

In the summer of 1911 Genie came to Monteagle to visit her mother. With characteristic energy and self-forgetfulness, for her body was always frail, she began to help her mother with the pile of work that was waiting on the Missionary Secretary's desk. Her trained faculties and sympathetic spirit made her a valuable assistant; and the mother's heart was happy because of her presence.

But Genie had been there only a little while when she was taken suddenly ill. The doctor was called, and as he did not seem to think the trouble was serious, the family was reassured. The next day the patient was worse, but still no cause for alarm was apparent. But early on the third day, the telegraph and telephone wires were busy taking news of her illness to the members of the family.

Down to the city the message went: "A surgeon

and two nurses wanted at once." Then followed the hurried preparations for an operation, and the long wait until the surgeon could come. At last the hour arrived, the train blew at the station, and the minutes moved by in slow procession until the doctor's carriage stood at the door. Then the man on whom so much depended walked into the room and looked at the figure on the bed. He felt for the pulse, only to find that it was gone! There could be no operation! The famous doctor slipped away as quietly as he had come; but Genie had noticed, and she knew that the change of plan meant something. Turning her eyes on the family physician, she said, "Doctor Hudson, am I going to die?"

Under the gaze of those clear, honest eyes there could be but one answer. "Yes, Miss Genie," he responded simply.

Again the searching look, and the voice continued, "I am not afraid, but if I am going to die, I want to talk." And then in low and measured tones she began to talk to her broken-hearted mother, and to thank her for all that she had been to her throughout her whole life. Nothing escaped her memory, and the low and struggling words paid the homage of a noble child to a noble mother.

Next came the maiden aunt who had been a second mother to her from the time she was born. Auntie Mitt's service had been one of love, and she did not feel that she needed any thanks. But the low voice was thanking her; and after her, the

absent ones. Oh, everybody had been so good to her; and best of all was the goodness of God. She could never have lived without His help.

The suffering mother listened up to this point, and then she tried to pray; but after a little her heart's agony burst forth, and she said, "O my child, how can I live without you?"

"You will have Sister and the boys," said the fast failing voice. "Tell her that she is to take the place of both of us. And then you know, it won't be long. I am just going on ahead, and I will see Papa, and by and by you will come." As her voice died away the mother's sobs broke the silence.

"We won't talk any more now," Genie said softly, "but open the windows and let the whole room be filled with light." And then she closed her eyes, and as quietly as a babe drops off to sleep, her spirit took its flight. Even the mother, whose eyes were riveted on her face, did not know when she was gone.

After the funeral, which was held in Macon, Mrs. Cobb returned to Tennessee. She went on with her work, and tried not to feel rebellious, but her heart was always asking, why. Soon after she reached Monteagle, she received a pathetic letter from Genie's mother-in-law, asking her to come to New York at once to help her in her bereavement. Mrs. Cobb went and did the best she could, but her own heart was breaking all the while. She said to a friend afterward, "It is not often that a bereaved

mother is called a thousand miles to comfort the mother-in-law of her dead child, but that is the experience that came to me."

After Mrs. Cobb's return from New York, Miss Belle Bennett and Mrs. MacDonell went to Monteagle to see her. They found her sitting on the porch with her body racked in pain, and her heart bowed with sorrow. So worn and emaciated was she that she seemed but a shadow of her former self. It was a sad visit, and, as the two friends left her there in the twilight with the shadows deepening around her, Mrs. MacDonell said to herself, "And this is Mrs. Cobb whose vivacity I had thought was eternal!" But she added quickly, "It is her body, her body! It is too weak to react."

When Mrs. Cobb returned to Nashville at the close of the summer to take up regular work, it was Mary who helped to bear the burden of the long days and the longer nights. She watched over her mother's health, trying to build up the feeble body and to enforce the needed rest. She also watched over her in her work. Mrs. Cobb brought home letters and papers every night, often working until one or two o'clock.

Again she watched over her mother in the matter of preparation for travel. When Mrs. Cobb had to go on one of her many journeys for the Mission Board, it was Mary who packed the trunk or suitcase and saw that everything was in readiness. And when the traveler returned it was Mary who met

her at the station and brightened the home-coming. She also watched over her mother in sorrow, doing everything in her power to comfort her and brighten her life. Mrs. Cobb's tears had so blinded her eyes that, but for Mary, she would have wandered entirely out of Wonderland.

XXXV

MRS. COBB MAKES HER LAST VISIT TO THE MISSION FIELD AND RETIRES FROM OFFICE

BEFORE Mrs. Cobb had had time to adjust herself to her loss, it was necessary for her to go on a second visit to Mexico. This time her companion was Miss Martha Lewis of Macon, now Mrs. W. F. Kaderly, who has furnished some notes which throw light on Mrs. Cobb's character.

Our visit to Mexico was made in 1912, just a few months after Miss Genie's death. Mrs. Cobb had little interest in sight-seeing or pleasure; but she was wonderfully brave, and was always anxious not to dampen my enthusiasm with her sorrow. Sometimes after we went to our room at night, she would lose her self-control, and talk to me of her great sorrow. She seemed to feel she could unburden her heart to me because I had known Miss Genie, and I think she found some comfort in doing so.

Our first stop was in Laredo where Mrs. Cobb was welcomed in a way that showed she had made a favorable impression on her previous visit. She had to spend nearly all her time straightening out the problems of the school; but she was interested in everyone's joys and sorrows, and she always seemed to have just the right word to say.

At Saltillo Mrs. Cobb looked up the American Consul and his wife, and found the latter to be one of her former Wesleyan daughters. She found the lady at home with a young baby, and the Consul out in the backyard trying to milk a goat, to get something to

quiet the baby. Mrs. Cobb laughed heartily at the situation, and teased the Consul about his mixture of domestic and professional duties.

While in Saltillo she had an interview with Carranza, who was just coming into prominence; and later, when she was in Mexico City, she was received in audience by President Madero, at his Palace. On these occasions she observed with the greatest care all the formalities and conventions which were expected, and she enjoyed "every inch" of the experience.

At one place where we stopped for a few days the proprietor of the hotel, who was an American, was wearing a fraternity pin which I found that he had worn ever since he was in college before the Civil War. I called Mrs. Cobb's attention to the pin, and she found that the old gentleman belonged to the same Fraternity as her step-grandson, John B. Cobb. After talking fully with the man she went upstairs and wrote, that very night, a long letter to John B. telling him all about the incident. This act was typical in that she always tried to pass her experiences on to the person whom she thought would be most interested. I remember that we were always looking for odd-shaped pitchers to carry to Miss Mitt.

During the two months of our stay in Mexico Mrs. Cobb was not only busy with the mission affairs in the places that we visited, but she was also running her office in Nashville, by means of the telegraph and Post Office. Most of her writing had to be done at night; and as she had no stenographer with her, it was often two or three A.M. before she retired. Her executive ability was wonderful.

Many courtesies were extended to her in every place, and these she received with graciousness and charm. She had a sense of the fitness of things, and she always knew the exact thing to say.

A year after this trip to Mexico the Oriental disease again fastened itself upon Mrs. Cobb. She

was so weak and thin by this time that she had no power to combat it. She was rarely confined to her bed, and she managed to attend to her work; but she lost weight, and her old enthusiasm forsook her.

In the Spring of 1914, she completed the quadrennium that she had promised to serve. She was now seventy years old, the age at which she had decided to retire. She held firmly to the idea that persons in office should resign before advancing age forced others to ask them to do so. In accordance with this principle, she retired from office at the meeting of the Woman's Missionary Council held in Fort Worth, just prior to her seventy-first birthday.

It was at this time that Mary Culler came home on her second furlough. She found Mrs. Cobb wearing deep black and staying closely at home. There were frequent visits from the Doctor, and many injections of emertine—a new remedy that had been discovered; but still she did not recover.

Miss Mitt, too, was not well, and in February, 1915, she went to Florida for her health. She hoped thereby to escape pneumonia, which so often threatened her in Nashville. But no sooner had she reached her destination than she was seized with a violent attack of the disease she was trying to escape. Mrs. Cobb was called to her bedside, and a trained nurse employed. Kind friends lent their aid and a skilled doctor was in attendance. For days and weeks the patient lingered between life

and death. The mail and wires were kept busy carrying messages between Seabreeze and Nashville. Mary's letters overflowed with love and solicitude. She wanted to go to Florida at once and help with the nursing, but one of the children was sick and she could not leave home. As the days passed, and Auntie Mitt did not get better, Mary felt that she must go anyway, and she wired that she was ready. But just at this juncture, Auntie Mitt began to improve.

Mrs. Cobb lingered by the convalescent. The burden was lifted from her heart, and she became conscious of the beauty around her—the orange groves hummed with ripe fruit; the avenues of trees festooned with gray moss; the brilliant coloring of the flowers; the auto drives on the hard, white sand of Daytona's world-famed beach. As Mrs. Cobb saw all of this, her thoughts went out to the loved ones whom she wished were there, to share her enjoyment. Thinking led to planning.

One day she exclaimed, "I am coming here again next winter, and I am going to bring Mary and one of the boys with me." The following day, while drinking in fresh beauties on an auto drive, she said, "When I come next winter I am going to bring Mary and all the boys!" A few more miles of beauty sped by the auto, and she broke forth afresh: "I can't stop with Mary and the boys. I want Mary's husband to be here too. I must have every member of the family!"

XXXVI

MRS. COBB WANDERS OUT OF WONDERLAND

JUST a yellow envelope handed to Mrs. Cobb in Seabreeze, Florida. Mary was sick in Nashville, and her husband wired that her mother had "better come." She took the first train; but the journey seemed interminable.

Mary, the unselfish wife and mother, had not been well for some time; though Mary-like, she had not told anybody. Even when compelled to go to bed, she still directed the affairs of the household and kept everything running smoothly. When at last she had to acknowledge that she was ill, a doctor was summoned. He pronounced the case pneumonia. Mary's calmness did not leave her. "My Aunt has just had pneumonia in Florida," she said to the doctor. "She is seventy-three years old and she is getting well. If she can recover, I can. I am not going to die. I am going to get well for my children."

One night, one day, and the next night. Mary was making a brave fight. At midnight she helped to word a reassuring telegram to be sent to the mother who was speeding toward her.

A little later in the night Mary insisted that her

husband should leave her with the nurse while he went into another room to get some needed rest. She was so urgent that he consented in order to satisfy her. As he was leaving the room she called after him, "Don't forget to give Eugene his medicine in the morning. I know he needs it." And then having provided for the comfort of everybody around her, Mary closed her eyes and slept—slept until the morning, the eternal morning of her soul.

And each hour was bringing the anxious mother nearer—nearer to the heartbreak at the end of the way.

At nine A.M. she passed Marietta, Georgia, and received the cheering telegram that Mary had dictated just before her sleep. At noon she reached Chattanooga. She went out on the platform to look for a telegram. A relative boarded the train —one who had come in person to break the news. He got her back into the train, and into the privacy of the drawingroom, and then told her gently but plainly that Mary was gone.

With the news every particle of strength went out of Mrs. Cobb's body. The thing which she had prayed might not come had come. Mary had been taken from her and from those three little boys who needed her so much. Her faith staggered. Her very heart seemed to atrophy.

After the funeral Mrs. Cobb's old friends wrote to her, begging her to return to Macon and make

her home there, but she would not have thought of doing so. If she had to live, she wanted to be of use to Mary's boys. So she remained in Nashville. Life was a dreary existence, made up of the doctor's visits, the care of the children, and the care of the home.

During her long life she had borne suffering of many kinds. More than once there had been heavy financial losses. These she had scarcely seemed to feel.

Loss by fire she also knew. Her big, inviting cottage at Monteagle, with its hand-paintings done by her daughters and its curios brought from many lands, had been destroyed by a fire that occurred in the spring when the house was unoccupied. Everything was burned without even a door having been opened. When Mrs. Cobb heard of this loss she said, "Other people have lived through things like this, and so can I. I intend to rebuild the cottage and have it ready to occupy this summer."

Again, the loss of health caused her daily suffering. This she bore in uncomplaining silence.

But the loss of loved ones—ah, that was a different matter. In her weakened physical condition she seemed unable to rise above it. It had been hard when she had had to give up her husband, who had reached the threshold of old age; but Mary and Genie had both been with her at that time to comfort her. It had been harder still when she was called upon to give up Genie, who was in the fresh-

ness and bloom of a beautiful womanhood. But Mary had been with her to try to fill the place of both daughters. But this last terrible blow was unspeakable. When Mary was gone, all was gone.

With the sorrow and accompanying ill health there came a morbid desire to shut herself away from all outside interests, and even from the sympathetic friends who called to see her. She either refused to see visitors or met them with such dignity and reserve that their words of comfort remained unuttered. The truth was, Mrs. Cobb felt that no one understood her sorrow; for, among those who knew her well, there was no one whose case was like hers—no mother who had been bereaved of all her children after they were grown.

Even in the thought of God, Mrs. Cobb found no comfort. She had spent her life in His service, and she could not understand why such troubles had overtaken her in her old age. She was too honest to pretend; and so to those who broke past her barrier of reserve, she said bitterly, "God has forsaken me."

Every night she sobbed herself to sleep, and every day she awoke to struggle afresh with the old question, "Why?" With husband gone and health gone, familiar employment gone, and all the children gone, her tears completely blinded her eyes. There was no Mary at hand this time to stay her steps, and Alice Cobb, the aged, wandered entirely out of Wonderland.

XXXVII

A CLUE TO COMFORT

THE trees at Monteagle had put on their party clothes for the autumn festival. Already some leaves had fallen, and these rustled on the walks in the Assembly Ground as two women made their way toward Wayside Cottage. The house had been closed for the winter by the careful hand of Miss Mitt, and the family had gone to Nashville. But Mrs. Cobb and Mary Culler had chosen to run away from the city for a last week together in the mountains. Mrs. Cobb's tired body and stricken heart responded to the quiet and beauty of the now deserted Assembly Grounds. She relaxed, and became more normal than at any time since Mary's death.

One day Mary Culler went out and gathered some persimmons from a tree on which the frost had fallen freely. They were perfect of their kind, and she took them home to tempt Mrs. Cobb's delicate appetite. Her Aunt thanked her but did not touch the fruit. When Mary Culler urged her, she replied, "No thank you; I do not intend to spoil my memories with American persimmons. I am going to die with the taste of a Chinese persimmon in my mouth."

A few days later the two were closing the cottage and preparing to leave. The house belonged to Mrs. Cobb and was hers to do with as she liked; but it had always been Auntie Mitt's prerogative to open the house in the spring and close it in the autumn. Now that Mrs. Cobb and Mary Culler had dared to open it after it had been formally closed, they realized that they had the problem on their hands of getting it closed again. They tried to remember where Auntie Mitt put everything—this key, this nail, that board, the rat poison, etc. But try as they would they could not remember all the details of Auntie Mitt's "annual closings." Viewed from the standpoint of imitation they seemed worse than a "milliner's openings." Finally Mrs. Cobb said with a smile, "Mary Culler, I know we can't get everything in place, just as Mitt leaves it; and yet if we don't, I will be sure to 'catch it' when she opens the cottage next year. You will be in China then, and I will be left to 'catch it' alone." Mary Culler's heart was encouraged. That was the first bright thing she had heard Mrs. Cobb say since Mary had left her.

The house was closed at last, and the two were on the train going home. At Cowan Mrs. Cobb took up her hand-bag to look for something that she wanted Mary Culler to see. As she turned over the contents a tattered piece of paper, that looked like a printed letter, came to light. She took it out saying, "That is Mrs. Arthur H. Smith's letter writ-

ten after her son's death. I have carried it around with me everywhere, but I have not had the courage to read it since Genie died." The train blew for Nashville, and Mrs. Cobb began to talk of other things; but Mary Culler's heart was singing. She knew that she now had a clue to a passageway which might lead her broken-hearted Auntie back into the land of Comfort and of Peace. The Mrs. Smith to whom Mrs. Cobb had referred was a lady in China who had lost all of her children.

Two women in deep mourning were at the station in Nashville with a younger one who had piles of baggage. Mary Culler was starting back to China. The two ladies in black were her aunts. Not one of the three could trust herself to talk; so they busied themselves with the blessed safety valves of tickets and of checks. Finally, when everything was ready, Mrs. Cobb took her niece aside saying, "I am going now to ask for a pass to go down to the train with you; but I fear I cannot get it for more than one person. In that case I will let Mitt go down, and I will stay up here."

In a few moments she returned with passes for two. Her face had made an effectual appeal, and the self-denial she had planned was not necessary.

Mary Culler stood on the rear platform of the Pullman looking at the two that were shrouded in black. How tiny they seemed—how shrunken! They showed their age now, and Mary Culler's

heart smote her at the thought of leaving them. If they had ever said a word to detain her she could not have gone. But they had wanted her to go back to her work. That had settled the matter. She waved a last good-bye; and went into the train. She knew, and her aunts knew, that she would never see them again.

For fourteen years Mary Culler had worked in and around Soochow, but when she returned to China she found herself temporarily assigned to work in Nanking. When she arrived at her new station she found that Mrs. Arthur Smith, whose station was hundreds of miles away, was holding meetings there. This was the lady who had written the printed letter that she had seen in Mrs. Cobb's bag. It seemed too good to be true. Mary Culler went to see her at once, and told her just what she wanted her to do. Then the two knelt and prayed. When they arose Mrs. Smith said, "Dear Mrs. Cobb, she must find comfort, and she must regain her health. It is not God's will for her to suffer as she is doing."

XXXVIII

MRS. COBB STARTS BACK TOWARD WONDERLAND

A TRAINED nurse was passing Wayside Cottage with an intent look on her face. She saw that Mrs. Cobb was on the porch, but she did not slacken her steps. She was a close friend of Mary Culler's, and that lady, when starting back to China had said to her: "I leave my family with you. Do all you can to take my place and look after them."

Right nobly the nurse had tried to measure up to that high trust; but now for three weeks she had not been near the cottage. It was a house of mourning; only those who were ready to give out comfort should enter there; and just now she had no comfort to give out. She was herself a mourner.

But Mrs. Cobb was calling her: "Miss Brougher, Miss Brougher, where have you been keeping yourself? We have missed you; and you must come in now for I have something to tell you." So the newly-bereaved nurse went in and sat down beside the sorely bereaved mother, but said nothing of her own sorrow. Mrs. Cobb was eager to talk. The substance of what she said follows:

I want to tell you that I have had a wonderful letter from a friend in China. The writer says she

knows that my health is better because she and her friends have been praying for me. And, oh, Miss Brougher, I am better; but I did not know until I received this letter that it was because those people away over in China were praying for me.

But before I tell you about the letter I must tell you about the one who wrote it. She is Mrs. Arthur H. Smith, the wife of the man who has written so many books about China. She and her husband are missionaries of the Congregational Church who have spent a lifetime in North China. I met Dr. Smith soon after I reached China. His knowledge is so broad, and his learning so great that his opinion is considered the last word in matters Chinese. When the National Missionary Conference was held in Shanghai during my visit to China, he was chosen from among all the American missionaries to be the chairman of the conference. I admired him so much that I was anxious to meet his wife. I had a picture in my mind, Miss Brougher, of just how she would look: for, of course, she would be a match for her well-groomed, distinguished looking husband.

And then one day, in the lobby of the building where the conference was being held someone said, "Mrs. Cobb, I want you to meet Mrs. Arthur H. Smith." And I looked up, and bowed; but what I saw was a gray-haired lady dressed in clothes that had long been out of style, and wearing a funny little round felt hat that looked as though it had been borrowed from some nice little schoolboy. I was completely taken aback; but I was not willing to lose my opportunity; so I said, "Mrs. Smith, I am staying at McTyeire Home. Won't you come there and take lunch with me today?" To my amazement, Miss Brougher, she said stiffly, "I have no time for social engagements," and with that she was gone.

After that peculiar experience I thought I was through with Mrs. Smith, but I could not help noticing her during the sessions of the conference.

There was a prayer-room upstairs where people went for voluntary intercession, during the business hours of the conference. Again and again I saw Mrs. Smith slipping out of her delegate's chair and going to that 'upper room' to pray. And then one day she came to me and said, 'The other day when you invited me to lunch I thought that you were some globe-trotter who was only interested in me in a superficial way; but now I have heard who you are; and I have come to say that if you wish to make an engagement to talk about the work, I will give you as much time as you like."

That opened the way for me to have a long three-hour interview with her. And as she talked I forgot all about her clothes; for I realized that I was face to face with a person of rare heroism and unstinted devotion. She told me of her work, and of her great sorrow. Dr. Smith, so she said, had been set apart by the missionary body to write books on China. That meant that he must live in the cities where the best libraries were to be found, but she had been unwilling to leave her work among the needy country people of North China. So the two had gone their separate ways—the author, to the city with its libraries and its books; and his wife, to the country with its teeming villages and towns.

But what she told me about her great sorrow, impressed me even more than what she said about her work. She told me that she and Dr. Smith had one son, a fine manly fellow who was in school in America. Her Chinese friends had known and loved Henry from the time that he was a little boy growing up in their midst. So the mother and these Chinese had been praying that when Henry's school days were over he would come back to China to help in the work. One day the mother's cup of joy ran over when she received a letter from the boy saying that he had volunteered and was preparing for missionary work in China.

Just about this time it was necessary for Dr. Smith to come to America to help in the "Million Dollar Campaign" which was then being put on by their Board. Mrs. Smith might have come to America with her husband; but again she felt that she could not leave her needy Chinese folk. She said that as soon as Dr. Smith reached America he went to see Henry; and the two had such good times together.

In the spring of 1906 Dr. Smith returned to China, but it was not until September that Mrs. Smith could leave her work to join him in Central China. They met at Kuikiang; and, oh, how they talked! all about Henry, and the splendid things that everybody was saying about him. Only a year or so now and he would be with them in China.

The next day, Mr. and Mrs. Smith climbed the magnificent heights of Kuling where they were to have a vacation together. On the table in their room they found a telegram from Peking. It read: "Love, sympathy, prayers," and was signed by several of their co-workers. They knew immediately that some news from America had reached Peking which had not yet reached them. A swift thought flashed through Mrs. Smith's mind, and she cried, "Henry has been drowned," but there was no reason for such a conclusion, and she put the thought aside. Husband and wife stood and looked at each other, and then Dr. Smith said, "Whatever this news is, we are not afraid, are we dear?" That very night he filled an engagement to speak at the Y. M. C. A. It was three whole days before they heard another word; and then the letters came. The father read them first and then he gently broke the news to the mother. Henry was drowned. He had seen a girl swimmer in distress, and had plunged into the lake to try to save her. Both had been drowned.

The human mother was stunned for a moment, and she faltered, "But-he-was-all-we-had-left" to which Dr. Smith replied quietly, "No, we have each other

and God." Instantly the mother remembered—God. And from that moment she was upheld.

They remained in Kuling for their vacation; and in the quiet days up there they thought of the many friends both in America and in China who loved Henry, and who had shared their hope that he would join them in China. These friends must be told. So they prepared and sent out a printed letter in order that each of these friends might know of their sorrow and their triumph.

It was in May the following year, that I met Mrs. Smith at the conference in Shanghai. She gave me one of those printed letters, and I prized it so much that I took it everywhere with me until I literally wore it out. But I almost know it by heart, and I will tell you some of the things that were in it. The letter told of the victory that came to Mrs. Smith as soon as she remembered God, and then it went on to say, "God has held us up on that table-land ever since; not asking why; not even 'dumb because thou dids't it'; but praising him, with every fresh pang, as we bury hope after hope."

In another place the letter told of the death of their only daughter and of the Italian mother in one of Mrs. Browning's poems. In the poem the mother said:

"Dead, both my boys!
One of them shot in the east, by the sea,
And one of them shot by the sea, in the west,
And when you sit at the feast
And want a great song for Italy free,
Let none look to me!"

After quoting this poem the letter continued: On a sunny slope in beautiful California, lies the daughter whose every heart beat was for China; who lived in America only to get through her studies, and hasten back to her adopted home: asleep by the sea in the west. In the city of his love, our dear Beloit, lies the boy that was to have moulded lives, perchance,

in Tungchow College; asleep in the east by the lake. And yet our song is ready. It is a song of triumph.

This is the Mrs. Smith who has written to me now. She has heard in some way that I have lost my children, and she has written out of her own experience to try to comfort me. She and her friends are praying for me. And oh, I need it so! When Mary died, I lost God! I was not rebellious; I was adrift. I could not find God. For a whole year I could not pray. But it is better now, and this letter explains the reason.

The nurse had been quietly listening while Mrs. Cobb talked; but now she said:

Mrs. Cobb, I did not intend to tell you why I have been keeping myself away; but now I must tell you. Three weeks ago I received a message saying that my brother had been drowned. He was trying to save a girl, and both of them were lost.

Instantly Mrs. Cobb was all sympathy; and for a few moments each of the sorrowing ones forgot her own grief as she tried to comfort the other.

And then in the twilight the two joined hands, and moved out along the dim passageway that leads from the Land of Sorrow to the Wonderland of Comfort and of Courage. And ever as they walked they saw the shadowy form of Henry's mother going on before, and beckoning them to follow.

PEACE

There is a peace that cometh after sorrow
Of hope surrendered, not of hope fulfilled;
A peace that looketh not upon tomorrow,
But calmly on a tempest that is stilled.

A Peace that lives not now in joy's excesses,
Nor in the happy life of love secure;
But in the unerring strength the heart possesses
Of conflicts won while learning to endure.

A Peace there is in sacrifice secluded
A life subdued—from will and passion free.
'Tis not the peace that over Eden brooded
But that which triumphed in Gethsemane.

—Jessie Rose Gates in *The Century.*

XXXIX

THE YEARS AS A GRANDMOTHER IN THE HOME

MRS. COBB'S health continued to improve—albeit there were frequent backsets—and as she gained in strength her interest in the things about her began to revive. A few weeks after the conversation with Miss Brougher she attended the Annual Meeting of the members of the Monteagle Assembly, and took part in the discussions. As a result she was made chairman of the committee whose province it was to make the places in and around the Assembly Grounds more accessible. With characteristic energy she gathered her committee about her and was soon at work naming gates, bridges and pikes.

This outside work was a help to Mrs. Cobb because it diverted her mind; but by far the greater part of her time was given to the care of the children and the management of her son-in-law's home. In this atmosphere she was reminded almost momentarily of her loss. Fortunately habit came to her assistance—her life-long habit of keeping busy. She darned the children's socks, mended their clothes, kept the house bright with flowers from Auntie Mitt's garden, and if there was any time

left she read, studied, crocheted, or wrote. Even in her feeble condition she still kept up the practice of sitting up until after midnight, and she never knew what it was either to stay in bed late in the morning, or to lie down and rest during the day.

The housekeeping itself was no easy task as servants were no longer plentiful; but she adapted herself to modern conditions and learned to get along with only one servant or with no servant at all. The retired school-teacher now pored over the cook-book with the same earnestness that she had once used in the study of Browning and Dante.

When America joined the World War, Mrs. Cobb's problem as housekeeper became more complicated; but here again she adapted herself to new conditions and was soon meeting the needs of her family and the requirements of the government at the same time. At the beginning of the war the art of canning was more unknown to her than the Chinese language; but she set herself to master its mysteries, and succeeded so well that in the summer of 1917 she put up many cans of vegetables for winter use. During this time she also learned to go to market herself and to patronize a "cash-and-carry" grocery store.

Mrs. Cobb's most serious task, however, was not the providing of food for her family; but the oversight of the lives of her three little grandsons. She had voluntarily assumed this task when Mary died, but as the months passed it became evident that it

was beyond her strength. Nevertheless she continued her efforts and did everything possible to enter into the lives of the boys. She helped them with their studies, and planned many trips for their enjoyment. The children loved her, but they were normal healthy boys, full of life and spirit, and they resented control as all boys do. This was hard on a person of her age; but even in this she succeeded better than could have been expected. She was no easy-going, doting grandmother; but one who meted out discipline as it was needed. Her son-in-law's verdict was, "Mother Cobb is just."

Her own opinion, however, was quite different. In a letter written at this time she said: "I have failed utterly in taking Mary's place in the home; but I am praying every hour that I may be gentle and kind and forebearing with the children, and in some slight degree take their mother's place."

These duties in the home did not prevent Mrs. Cobb from trying to do her part in the missionary work of the church. Her days as an officer of the Board were over; but the following letter dated May 6th, 1917, will show that she went even beyond her strength in seeking to forward the cause she loved.

I did not get to the Council Meeting in April on account of chills and fever—I am up again now though a degree of fever continued through most of last week. Still I determined to attend the Meeting of the Board of Missions, and did so, much to the disgust of the family. I was present at three all-day

sessions with one evening thrown in for good measure; and I do not feel that I am any worse for having done so.

From all of this it will be seen that Mrs. Cobb was moving nearer and nearer to the Portal of Wonderland, whence she had gone out. There were still days of depression; for as she said herself, "the weakness of body and sorrow of heart act and react upon each other; neither can be cured so long as the other exists." But these days of hopelessness were growing fewer and fewer, and the days of self-forgetfulness and service were growing greater and greater.

XL

"SUNSET AND EVENING STAR"

THE winter of 1917 was a hard one. The World War was causing suffering at home and carnage abroad. Nature itself seemed to be in league with the powers of darkness for, just when the coal shortage was greatest, the temperature in Nashville dropped ten degrees below zero and stayed there for a number of days. In the home of her son-in-law, Mrs. Cobb did not lack anything in the way of material comfort but she was keenly alive to the suffering that was all around her.

She had made all her arrangements to take a six-weeks' course in Home Economics at Peabody College which was not far from her home, but the weather was so cold and her health was so frail that she dared not undertake it.

She could not be satisfied when she was not at work, however, and she was soon busy at something else. The women of the Mission Board wanted someone to prepare two booklets—one on the history of the mission work in China, and the other on the same subject in Korea. Mrs. Cobb was chosen to do this writing because of her long connection with the work and her intimate knowledge of the two fields. It was quite an undertaking, even for a person in good health, as each of the booklets was to contain some thirty pages of historical mat-

ter which had to be gathered from many sources, and this had to be put together in a way that would hold the interest of the average woman in the average missionary society.

Mrs. Cobb undertook the work, and the first of the booklets which was called "The Story of the Years in China" was published in January, 1918. In writing to Mary Culler about this work Mrs. Cobb said:

> In a moment of great weakness I consented to do this writing. . . . I have been absorbed by "The Story of the Years in Korea," and have little time for anything else. That is finished now, that is, the first draft, and I feel much relieved. I think I will have sense enough not to do any more "promising" since these two booklets have proven such a burden to me, and with such unsatisfactory results. The one about China is off the press, but I have not had the courage to examine a copy as I am constantly remembering things which I should have put into it, and did not.

One month from the time that Mrs. Cobb wrote this letter she passed away. "The Story of the Years in Korea" was the story of the end of her years on earth. During the last month she worked hard on this booklet revising it and preparing it for the printer; and then, just as the work was finished, she was taken ill with pneumonia. She received every care from friends and loved ones, as well as from skilled doctors and nurses, but the worn out body could not withstand the disease, and on February 20, 1918, just a little after sunrise, her brave spirit went out.

Miss Mitt, the sister who had depended on her, and who had never been separated from her except for short periods, was unable to rally from the shock. She collapsed entirely and although no organ was diseased when she was put to bed, she developed pneumonia, and within four days she had followed Mrs. Cobb.

They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided.

There was only one place to which they could have taken the remains of Mrs. Cobb—back to the city that had so long been her home; back to the college where she had dreamed, and later turned her dreams into action; back to Wesleyan which to many people was a synonym for her name. There, amid those who loved her, Dr. A. J. Lamar, her husband's stepson, and Dr. C. R. Jenkins, President of the College, said the last word. Every possible honor was paid to her, the local alumnae attending in a body, and the members of the senior class all being present.

So small had Mrs. Cobb's family become that there was only one person present at the funeral who was related to her by ties of blood, but notwithstanding this fact the chapel was full of mourners. In her going all who knew her were bereaved from the highest people in Macon, who were present in great crowds, down to the humble negro servant, "Uncle Johnson," who had faithfully served the College for nearly fifty years. This old colored man

had requested the privilege of attending the funeral, and as he sat apart from the other mourners, he constantly wiped his eyes.

When the service was concluded the seniors in cap and gown formed themselves into two lines which extended, as a guard of honor, from the door of the chapel to the funeral car. Down this lane the casket was borne, and the human form of Alice Cobb left Wesleyan for the last time. The body was taken to the cemetery and laid beside her husband in the quiet lot that overlooked the peaceful river.

One day a month after these events, Mary Culler received the American mail in Sungkiang, China, and opened it to find that her "Auntie" was gone! When the first shock was over she took out all of Mrs. Cobb's recent letters and read them again in the light of her going. One, which had been written in December contained this sentence, "My efforts should be to rise above my troubles; and to go out, not *under* a cloud, but *riding* the cloud."

But the best letter of all was one which had been written by Mrs. Cobb to her friend, Mrs. Arthur H. Smith, and forwarded by that lady to Mary Culler. It was as follows:

2202 Elliston Place,
Nashville, Tenn.,
Oct. 26, 1917.

DEAR MRS. SMITH:

The summer passed without my answering your precious letter, though I thought of you almost every day. How good you are to me and how good in Dr.

Smith to send me the leaflets. I feel so unworthy of a place in the thought of you two dear people. Yet I am very grateful for the acquaintance, and especially for the helpful letters that have come to me. I have been trying to take hold of life again. It is a most difficult task, but for the sake of the three boys, I have made an effort to feel an interest in affairs, and to enter into their lives.

I am trying to take hold of the little things of life again—my dress, my hair, and personal appearance; and better still I am trying to take my place in the mission work. I am a member of the Woman's Executive Committee, and also am one of the two women members of the General Executive Committee. I am now attending these meetings and taking part in the exercises. Please pardon my writing so much of self, but I want you to know the result of your prayers. True I am hourly longing for the two dear children who were such a comfort to me, but I am trying to make my life worth while in these last days on earth.

My health has improved in the last few months—began really to improve last year through your prayers; and in May I met Dr. Manget of Huchow who had had considerable experience with the disease from which I have been suffering. He took charge of my case and has really benefited me much. I have not been so well in years. True I weigh only eighty-four and one-half pounds, but I get along well if my strength is not overtaxed.

Won't you write to me again? I do not wish to impose upon you, but your letters are a source of such strength that I must ask for another.

Your friend,

Alice Cobb.

When Mary Culler had finished reading this letter, she folded it up and dried her eyes. She realized that her Aunt had conquered her sorrow, and gotten all the way back to Wonderland.

XLI

AFTERMATH

SIX years had come and gone. Everything in the Cobb lot in the quiet cemetery looked just as it had always looked since the simple slabs for Mrs. Cobb and Auntie Mitt had been put into place—everything except that now there was a nearby grave bearing the name of James Jackson Cobb. This splendid Christian man had "fallen on sleep."

But out in the world, away from the atmosphere of that cemetery all was change and progress. Mary Culler, again on furlough, could not help thinking how many things had taken place which were exactly in line with what Mrs. Cobb would have desired. In the family, for instance, John B. had carried out the purposes formed in boyhood, and had become a missionary. He and his bride had sailed for Japan in 1918; they had returned to America on furlough in 1923; and had now gone back to the field, taking with them their mother and aunt, Mrs. James Cobb and Miss Millie Cobb. Meantime, John B.'s sister, Ida Mallary Cobb, had graduated from Wesleyan; she had consecrated her life to Christian work; had rendered brilliant service as Secretary for the Junior Epworth League of

her denomination. Last of all, she married Mr. Arva Floyd, a student volunteer, and had sailed with him for Japan, where the entire family of six people would now be together in missionary work.

In church and missionary work even greater changes had come to pass. Mrs. Cobb had scarcely been laid to rest before the Centenary Movement was launched, and, in the six years that had followed, four new mission fields had been opened in as many countries, and nearly three hundred new missionaries sent out. How Mrs. Cobb would have rejoiced in the Centenary, and how she would have worked for its success; for it! Like her, it had "its hand on the past, and its eye on the future."

At Wesleyan, too, there were marks of change and progress on every side, and Mary Culler knew that these things, too, would have gladdened the heart of Mrs. Cobb. For one thing, the word "Female" which had held the central position in the name of the college—a word, by the way, which Mrs. Cobb, in her later years, had refused to use—had been extracted in the dentist's chair of the State Legislature, and the Trustees of the College had cheerfully paid the bill.

Another change at Wesleyan which surely would have gratified Mrs. Cobb was the completion of the "Cobb Alumnae Chair of English," which had been begun in 1909 under the administration of Bishop W. N. Ainsworth.

But these changes were all of a minor character

when compared with others that had taken place. Wesleyan now had women Trustees. The charter had been amended, and three Alumnae Trustees had been elected in 1924, just ninety-nine years after Duncan G. Campbell introduced that historic but ill-fated bill into the Legislature providing for a "Seminary of Learning" in Georgia which was to have on its Board of Trustees fifteen "males" and fifteen "females." As Mary Culler contemplated this change and thought of how hard her aunt had worked to bring it about in her day, she thought of how happy Mrs. Cobb would have been to know that the three women elected were all her students.

Another change that Mrs. Cobb had so ardently desired for Wesleyan was that it might become a standard college; and, as Mary Culler loked around, six years after the death of her aunt, she found that this, too, had come to pass. Through the efforts of the president, Dr. William F. Quillian, the necessary endowment had been secured, and all the other requirements of a Class A college had been met. It had received recognition in the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States, and in The American Assocation of University Women, and had now been placed on a Preferred List in each of these associations. Thus the dream that had lain in the heart of Alice Cobb through the long, long years had finally come to pass.

But wonderful as all this seemed to Mary Culler,

she found that an even brighter dream was now being dreamed for Wesleyan, one that probably went beyond all the hopes of all the friends of Wesleyan in all the past. This was the dream of a "Greater Wesleyan" to be erected on a wonderful site that had been purchased in the suburbs of Macon. As Mary Culler learned of the plans that had been launched to raise a million dollars for the erection of a modern college plant on this site, she said to herself, "Mrs. Cobb may not have thought of anything so great as this for Wesleyan, but she would have instantly approved of it; for she would have felt that now, at last, something was being planned that was worthy of the 'Mother of Women's Colleges.' "

As she finished musing Mary Culler's mind went out to the difficulties in the way of accomplishing the new task; but before she could enumerate them she seemed to see again the vision of Alice Cobb standing beside the Portal of Wonderland. And this time the Portal was strangely like the entrance to Wesleyan's new Campus out at Rivoli. Mary Culler realized that the woman in the vision was giving a message to her old students and as she listened she caught the words, "I expect every one of you to accomplish the impossible." How familiar the words sounded.

But this time they had a new significance for, like the cry from Flanders Fields, they brought a challenge from the dead. As the full meaning of

this challenge came over Mary Culler, the thought of the difficulties melted away, and her heart was filled with a great desire to "carry on."

THE GIFT THE DEAD DESIRE

By Alfred Noyes

There's but one gift that all our dead desire,
One gift that men can give, and that's a dream,
Unless we, too, can burn with that same fire
Of sacrifice: Die to the things that seem.

Die to the little hatreds; die to greed;
Die to the old ignoble selves we knew;
Die to the base contempt of sect and creed,
And rise again like these, with souls as true.

Nay (since these died before their task was finished),
Attempt new heights, bring even their dreams to birth,
Build us that better world, aye, not diminish
By one true splendor that they planned on earth.

And that's not done by sword, or tongue, or pen,
There's but one way—God make us better men.

APPENDIX

Text of the First Bill Introduced into the Georgia Legislature to Secure a Seminary of Learning for Females.

Extract from Butler's *History of Macon:*

"The first prominent action taken upon this subject had been during the session of the legislature in November, 1825, when accompanying the report of the committee on public education and free schools, Hon. Duncan G. Campbell offered the following:

A Bill

'To be entitled an Act to establish a public seat of learning in this State for the education of females.

'It is the distinguished happiness of the present generation to live in an age of improvement, and enjoy the means of ameliorating the condition of all classes of society. In a review of the progress of literature throughout the country in which we live, we are furnished with the fact that in no part of this vast Confederation has the education of females been the object of public munificence. To this class of society is entrusted the early instruction of both sexes, and our feelings and principles are of maternal origin. How necessary, then, that a department so high, and charged with duties so delicate and important should be early placed under the regenerating hand of science and religion. These are the strongest safeguards, under Providence, of political security and individual excellence. To direct them in their appropriate destinies is the grateful duty of those who wish well to the national prosperity. For the acquirement of solid and useful female education our sister states will afford but incompetent reliance. And if we

were but satisfied of their sufficiency, the resort would be too humiliating for the generous ambition of Georgia and her means of indulging it. For the purpose, therefore, of rescuing from comparative obscurity the fairest portion of our community and enabling them to contribute to the vast store of literature, philosophy and religion,

'Be it therefore enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Georgia, in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by authority of the same, That the superintendence and regulation of female education throughout the State, and particularly of the public seat of learning hereby established for that purpose, shall be committed and entrusted to one board of trustees to be denominated "The Board of Trustees of the Female Seminary of Georgia." Said Board shall consist of fifteen males and fifteen females; and that the seminary may be carried into effect as speedily as possible the following persons are hereby appointed trustees.'" [Here follow the thirty names.]

There were seven other sections to the bill defining the authority of the Board and making all other necessary provisions for the permanent establishment of the institution. The Bill passed the House by a large majority, but contrary to expectation, met with strong opposition in the Senate and was lost.

THE END

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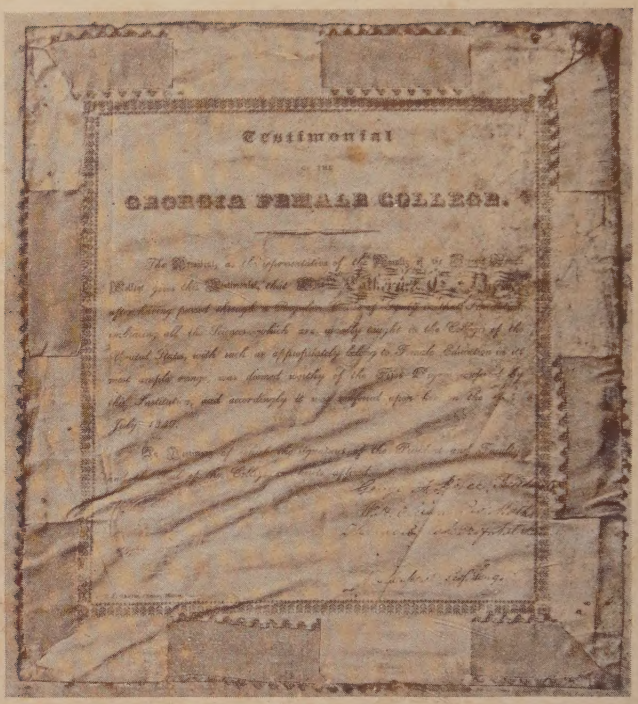
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